



**San Quentin Warden
Robert L. Ayers Jr.**

SAN QUENTIN NEWS Mission Statement

The San Quentin News is once again an authorized publication. Warden L. Robert Ayers Jr. determined having a news paper for the population would be of benefit to all. Speaking on the issues important to prisoners, we the staff at San Quentin News shall seek to include everyone. A voice, for everyone, it will give the many different views and perspectives of prison life. San Quentin is known by name all over the world; what's done here, is copied by many. Death Row, Lifers, H-Unit, and even the Reception Center have a use for good and relevant information on what is going on around them, and to them, and a story to tell. The "What" in "What's going on," shall be the message. A focus on the reduction of recidivism is going to be an essential part of this paper.

The following areas are our primary topics: (1) Educational: Acknowledgments of Graduating students, and featuring students and instructors from basic-education through college and vocations. (2) Rumor Control: Finding out what is "really" going on in a situation. (3) Sports: Getting the scoop on who's at their best game. (4) Special Events: Peace Day, Graduations, Concerts. (5) Legal: General Medical and Housing issues; major court rulings. (6) Interviews: Key Staff Q&A, SQ Volunteers and Visitors of interests. (7) Editorial: Commentary of "life" here at SQ and reflections therein. (8) Writing: Poetry and (very) short prose. (9) Programs: Features of SQ self-help programs. (10) Religious: Features of Religious services and interviews of Chaplains and Others. More news to come as we figure things out...

San Quentin Fact:

Two of the Wardens in the 2008 San Quentin Calendar were already deceased when their photos were taken.

INTEGRATING PRISON CELLS

Suzan L. Hubbard
Director Adult Institutions

California's prisons have long been integrated. Women's housing, dining rooms, camps, classrooms, programs, work assignments, yards, visiting and dorms already have integration policies in place.

The Integrated Housing Program will give us more versatility in housing male inmates, assist in gang management, reduce racial tension, break down prejudicial barriers and attitudes and reflect community values.

However, this plan does not call for forced integration. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is not mandated to integrate the entire inmate popula-

tion with respect to in-cell housing. Current safety and security measures will remain. Employees are still expected to use sound custodial decisions for safe housing.

Should there be a race-related incident, the plan would be temporarily suspended. Offenders who pose a threat to one another will be separated. Safety is paramount.

Historically, the CDCR used race as one factor in housing decisions, primarily at reception centers. The new regulations ensure that race will not be the sole determining factor. We are confident this plan will work and promote inmate integration where safe and appropriate to do so.

"TOUGH ON CRIME" BILLIONAIRE INDICTED

Kenneth R. Brydon

Henry Nicholas III, co-founder of Broadcom Corporation, was indicted on 21 charges including drug possessions, drug distribution, and spiking drinks of unknowing victims with the drug ecstasy. Nicholas is the one who funded the last minute effort to defeat Proposition 66, which would have modified the 3 Strikes Law, and result in the release of 3 Strikers with non-violent misdemeanor offenses. His current project, is the voter initiative that will be on the November ballot titled: "Marsie's Law." According to current Federal law a life-term may be imposed if convicted on a number of charges. In the State of California, his charges could result in multiple Three Strike sentences being handed down.

"Marsy's Law" results in turning most life "with" the possibility of parole, into a life "without" parole. The passing of these laws would increase the length of parole denial from that of one year to a maximum of five years, to that of a

minimum of three years and a maximum of 15 year denial. This process would suppose that the "normal" denial would be for 15 years.

This law seems to be intended to be applied retroactively, so, even a seven-to-life sentence, would suddenly jump to a 15-to-life upon appearing in front of the board after this law is enacted. Henry Nicholas's daughter, Marsy, was murdered in the early '80s, and he has taken to using his wealth to support what are harsh penalties for all prisoners. Marsy's law also will undo court settlements that required Parole Violators be given certain due process rights.

Information indicates that Mr. Nicholas is undergoing treatment for abuse of alcohol. Like many prisoners, he is being introduced to a 12-step program which teaches tolerance and forgiveness. Perhaps a second chance for everyone, including himself, would be a good thing...

SQ's Law Libraries Serve All Segments Of The Population

by John E. Dannenberg

San Quentin has two fully compliant law libraries plus three satellite partial law libraries to serve the prison's diverse population. The Main Law Library is now located in a renovated section of the old laundry building on the lower yard and serves the North Block, H-Unit, West Block, Gym and Special Program populations. The SHU library, located in the Ad-Seg visiting area, serves the Row and Ad-Seg populations. The satellite libraries are located in North Segregation, East Block and the Adjustment Center.

Two Senior Librarians, Tom Brobst and John Nelson, supervise the Main library, including its recreational book section. A third Senior Librarian, Doug Jeffrey, runs the SHU library. The Main Library employs five prisoner law clerks and five general

circulation clerks. Duties of the law clerks include ordering all law books and supplies, filing and updating the law book collection (for all five law libraries), maintaining standard legal forms, and assisting inquiring prisoners at the law window. Additionally, the law clerks do legal copying and respond to questions referred via the SHU librarian.

Newly added to the Main Law Library are five computers which provide users with lookup capability on court-mandated (*Gilmore*) case law plus Title 15, the Department Operations Manual, California court rules, the California Digest, the Federal Digest, Witkins and California Jurisprudence research tools. The computers provide word search capability over all volumes which greatly speeds research, but no printing or

typing capability is provided.

The Main Law Library collection includes all California case law from 1860 on. Federal case law books include the district court rulings (Federal Supplement) and appellate court rulings (Federal Reporter) from about 1940. SQ's U.S. Supreme Court case law goes back to 1790. The current validity of any past case may be researched using Shepard's Citations. Additionally, one may use Shepard's to research statutes, regulations, court rules and jury instructions. To research California law by topic, California Jurisprudence is a comprehensive legal encyclopedia citable in court pleadings. Additionally, the venerable Witkins legal research book series provides detailed (and citable) advice on California criminal and evidence

Men's Advisory Council

Sammy Johnson, Chairman

The Men's Advisory Council ("MAC") was developed to be a conduit for the General Population Inmates to the Warden and all Department Heads as well as Correctional Staff. It is this Council's Position to effectively represent and communicate the opinions, grievances, suggestions, and recommendations of the inmate population at San Quentin.

There are two primary directives of the MAC: The first is to seek to improve inmate/staff relations. The second is to promote the general welfare of all inmates at SQ.

In order for any relationship to work within a social society, a gated community, marriage, or a common arena, there must be first and foremost a line of communication and a common interest. As many of the veteran staff retires, they are being replaced with younger Correctional Officers fresh out of the Academy with the understanding that all inmates are hostile and not to be trusted. This in turn, breaks down the line of communication, especially here at San Quentin where it is needed the most.

SQ affords more programs than any other prison institution in the State of California with the common interest of Rehabilitation. And, in order for rehabilitation to achieve its goal, Staff, the Administration, and the Inmate population must communicate their community interests.

In order to promote the general welfare of all inmates at SQ, this Council's objective is

to achieve and establish with in the Laws and Regulations governing procedures and guidelines the least restraints and restrictions possible governing its classification of this Level II prison at SQ. By this process, impacting the on-going rehabilitation process towards re-entry of all inmates back into mainstream society.

In order to accomplish the improvement of the general welfare of all inmates at SQ, this MAC seeks to improve the following list of everyday concerns and necessities. These are only but a few listed concerns:

SQ Integration policy and forced participation.

Culinary Food Quality, Quantity, and Sanitation.

Laundry Exchange (inconsistency).

Notification of Institutional Program changes within units by staff.

Canteen concerns (can exemption, healthier items & price increases).

Institutional Digital Cable Conversion (before February 17, 2009).

The social objective and concerns of this MAC is the betterment of all aspects of living condition and the healthy relationship of Inmates, Staff, and Administration. It is also our interest that all inmate concerns in this social community are needed and valued. A closed mouth does not get fed. Remember, "Respect increases the quality and quantity of a community."

ANDREW GERARD LEAVITT

July 02, 1959 – May 25, 2008

WHEN THE PAST NO LONGER MATTERS

Stephen Liebb

Andy Leavitt paroled on a Sunday night. It wasn't the way anyone wanted to see him leave, but in the end, we welcomed his release from pain. He showed great courage as he fought the good fight, remaining polite and caring to those around him, even when knowing his time in this world was to be cut short. He arrived at SQ in June of 1982, serving 25 years to Life. Soft spoken, he worked as a Machinist in the Vocational Machine shop.

A journeyman machinist, Prison Industry constantly pursued him, where he could make top dollar. Yet, he stayed on in Vocations to mentor other students. Andy was a accomplished teacher with patience that made him the one everyone went to for help or



guidance. Andy's parents, Victoria and John Leavitt, were there with him not only in his closing days, but in his life throughout his incarceration. Mr. and Mrs. Leavitt visited Andy and his brother David weekly for all of Andy's 26 years here at SQ.

The bitter-sweet of seeing a child die in prison, was surely offset with truly knowing that their son was a man of whom they could be very proud of. His parents rightfully saw him as the man he'd become, opposed to the crime committed in his youth. On Friday, May 30, 2008, a memorial service was held in the Catholic Chapel to honor Andy. Some were there who knew Andy for upwards of 25 years. May his passing bring more meaning to those still here.

The California Supreme Court has accepted several cases for review to determine when, if ever, the fact that a person committed a murder in the distant past no longer supplies reliable evidence that he is currently dangerous.

Lifers who are eligible for parole and who have appeared before the Board of Parole Hearings are well acquainted with the Board's use of their commitment offense as the primary reason to deny parole. Lifers who have been found suitable for parole and have had their suitability finding reversed by the governor know that their crime, usually committed decades ago, still matters.

We have to live with our decisions. We cannot turn back the clock or hold back the years and undo the wrong we have done to ourselves and others. For those of us who have taken a life, the pain we have caused is irrevocable. No amount of positive programming can fill the hole we left in the family of the victim of our crime. We can show our repentance in the path we choose and the decisions we make now.

Courts in California are striving to achieve a balance between the immutable harm done to the victim and their loved ones and to the requirements of the parole statutes, which state that parole should be the rule rather than the rare exception.

Many lifers now see themselves as victims of injustice. Justice is not an abstract principle. It is relational. Justice promotes good relations between people and groups of people. Injustice breaks down good relations and breeds anger, hostility and violence.

The concern for justice should not be confined to just those of us who must appear before the Board to gain an opportunity to rejoin free society. In 1963, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote the "Letter from Birmingham City Jail." He was responding to eight white clergymen in Alabama opposed to civil

disobedience. They feared his actions would incite civil disturbances.

He wrote: "I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Moreover, I am cognizant of the inter-relatedness of all communities and states. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all."

Two quotes are engraved on the wall of the museum of Jewish Heritage. "Remember, Never forget," and, "There is hope for your future. " As lifers we can never forget why we have spent the past years in person. But if we as a society believe in redemption and that people can rehabilitate themselves then a real hope and future must be extended to those who have complied with the requirements for parole. In *Cappiello v. New York State Board of Parole* 800 N.Y.S. 343, 2004 WL 3112628, Judge Wetzel wrote:

"Murder is obviously a very serious, tragic crime involving this loss of a human life...Each day, the court interacts with defendants accused and convicted of terrible murders, as well as the families of the victims. Those families come to court, listen to the evidence, weep at the crime scene photos, and speak passionately about their loss at the sentencing of the convicted defendants. There is no greater agony than that of a family member of a murder victim, and this court acknowledges and empathizes with that pain, It is a pain which does not abate over the years and nothing can become to relieve that suffering. The only variable that can change in this situation is the defendant... [some] defendants...take advantage of the opportunities in prison for rehabilitation, move on in their lives to do service in the community, to make amends for their actions, and to make contributions to their families and to society. Their achievements, as great

as they are, will never erase the horrendous brutality of the past, nor can it ever fully compensate society for the damage which has been done. However, in a system which is premised on the hope and possibility of rehabilitation, and a statutory system which mandates a serious, rational and meaningful evaluation of the statutory criteria, we must allow an individual who has taken advantage of opportunities to rehabilitate himself to move beyond a horrific act of many years ago and to rejoin society to contribute according to his ability."

The arbitrary practice of the Board in reciting the facts of the murder at a parole hearing and using that as the basis to deny parole has been exposed primarily through habeas petitions filed in proper. The unselfishness of inmates assisting others for the common good has resulted in favorable state court orders in cases like *In re Elkins*, *In re Viet Mike Ngo*, and from the Federal District Court in *Jerome Thomas of Habeas Corpus*.

Perseverance and commitment are required to gain release through habeas petitions. The Attorney General routinely appeals virtually every favorable ruling from the lower court. Misguided and sometimes selfish advice comes from fellow Lifers and self-proclaimed jailhouse lawyers counseling individuals not to file. Many Lifers have been dissuaded from seeking relief from the courts against the Board or Governor for parole denials. An ancient principle from the Torah admonishes us not to put a stumbling block before the blind. Lifers need to become informed about the legal process and the pertinent cases dealing with parole issues. Through respect for other viewpoints and approaches, Lifers have been able to bring issues relating to parole before California State and Federal Courts. Continued success will come from applying wisdom as Hillel states: *"If I am not for myself, who is for me. If I am only for myself, who am I. If*

JOURNEY TO A.A. DEGREE

Michael A. Tyler

I never thought education would be so much fun and rewarding. It's funny how things look one way at first, and then change right when you finally accept how they look. My journey to an A.A. Degree involved more people than I thought. The major figures were: my mother, my aunt, all the volunteers, the other students, and, finally, myself.

In January 2004, it began here. My mother always gave me the reinforcement of, "You can do anything you want with a little work." So, I signed up for college in one of those moments of "I can do anything" attitudes had come upon me. Those moments seemed to pass fast.

I remember telling the coordinator of Patten University, Jody Lewen, "I can't quit any more!" I saw it had been too much of life already. While my mother brought this type of understanding, I had to do my part. Mom was a great role model; I wish I'd used her sooner.

My aunt always sees the glass half-full, and uplifts me in her own ways. She doesn't know the role she played. Seeing how she understood made me want to learn even more just from our conversations. She showed the importance of getting an education in



the long run.

The tutors and instructors are special! These beautiful people help in the best of their capabilities. Sometimes, just by repeating the question, other

times showing you step-by-step, and always with real respect!

The other students played an equally important role. Everyone came together for one purpose – to learn and to help each other. I know there were a few times where I didn't get the grade I wanted and instead of putting me down, the other students lifted me up and reminded me that we all have bad days, and that tomorrow I can still do better. That sounds so simple, but that's the underground work we do for each other to keep us going.

Now, my part in all of this: I could not allow myself to give up or disappoint the rest. Work in the day, and school at night was hard. Squeezing in home work was hard, but now I see its value in a better life. It's meant the world to me, affecting every part of my life positively.

To those reading this, education does change your life. Everyone, both free and in prison, should be offered an education. A brighter future for everyone isn't a bad thing.

CALIFORNIA REENTRY PROGRAM

Kenneth R. Brydon

Resources for a successful parole are available through the "California Reentry Program." This program is brought to SQ by a group of volunteers. Available every Tuesday night in H-Unit, and every Thursday night on the Lower Yard in the "Old Laundry." The program also provides assistance for Lifers who want help in developing Parole Plans for the Board. Allyson West leads the group of well-educated, highly motivated individuals who sacrifice their own time to offer the following:

- A. Career Advice, giving guidance and assistance in what field of employment best for you.
- B. Employment, finding job opportunities in the field of choice.
- C. Education, continuing education,

- from GED, Trade Schools, to College, and the financial aid to attend.
- D. Housing, transition housing, and other assistance for living arrangements.
- E. Substance Abuse Treatments, the California Reentry Program is connected with the "Bay Area Services Network" which can help you in locating help in overcoming addiction.
- F. Miscellaneous Issues, such as, attaining identification, attaining transcripts, child support and parental rights issues, parole agent contact, attorney referrals, etc...
- G. Monthly Workshops, are held in H-Unit for the following: Resume Writing, Job Interviews, Effective Workplace Communications, Assessing Your Skills and

Interests, Labor Market Information (who's hiring), the filling out of Job Applications, and, occasionally, Health and Immigration workshops. The H-Unit Workshops require sign-up, to be sent to "Allyson West c/o Education Department."

The Tuesday's California Reentry Program is available by showing up when announced in the dorm. Thursday's program, in the Old Laundry, requires being on a movement sheet; requests to be placed on the movement can be sent to: "Allyson West c/o Education Department." Or, if you see Allyson, ask her to include you. Ducats will no longer be issued; only the movement sheet is necessary.

California Reentry Program
P.O. Box 483
San Quentin, CA 94964

We Don’t Scare Straight... We Communicate!

By S.Q.U.I.R.E.S.

Imagine, if you will, being a prisoner in one of San Quentin State Prison’s most secured and notorious housing units. This is the housing unit where most outsiders consider all hope to be abandoned and lost. This is the place where some say they keep California’s most dangerous, incorrigible, and irredeemable souls. This place that I am speaking of, is California’s “Death Row” or the now politically correct “Condemned Row.” The men and women in California who carrying the title of, “Condemned Inmates,” are the very individuals most people believe cannot be trusted with anyone else other than their own peers (other condemned inmates). They are the group of men and women who have not only given up on themselves, but also their families, communities and ultimately society. They are “Societal Outcasts,” from which nothing positive can come... ***So they say.*** If we look back at the history of Condemned Inmates, we will find a myriad of men and women with a wide range of crimes that had an extremely negative impact on societies yesterdays, todays and tomorrows. Most people will continue to focus on that negative light and see nothing else but a man or woman who is now only wasting the state’s time and money... Ladies and Gentlemen, this is far from true, from this world of cement and steel, a rose from concrete can grow.

So let’s take a look at that history again; this time, let’s look a little deeper. If you dig below the surface, you will find a host of Condemned men and women who have reached back out to their families and communities by way of authoring books, letters, periodicals, etc. I will not attempt to make any excuses for crimes committed, but instead I want to make an attempt at shining a light on the compassion that still lies in the hearts of these people who some believe have nothing else to live for. If you listen to what I am saying, and you dig just deep enough, you will find a man by the name of Ross “Patch” Keller. Ross Keller, convicted of murder with special circumstances was given the penalty of a “Death Sentence.” In the early sixties, Ross Keller, the father of a growing son, was faced with a difficult challenge. He like many other incarcerated men placed himself in the situation of not being able to care for his family. Ross Keller’s son was being influenced by the negative influences of society and ultimately began traveling the path of his father. Ross Kel-

ler came up with an idea of a program that could possibly help him, help his son. In a desperate attempt, Ross Keller drew up a proposal to create this program. In 1964, San Quentin’s Utilization of Inmates Resources, Experiences and Studies other wise known as S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. was born, holding its first workshop with “at-risk” youth from the San Francisco Bay Area. Although Ross Keller’s son was unable to attend the first workshop, he did eventually gain admittance into a later workshop. However, Ross Keller himself was unable to attend the workshop due to his being a prisoner in this facility.

Today, 44 years later, S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. holds workshops for at-risk youth that are mentored by the incarcerated men of San Quentin. The workshops provide close communication between the youth and the inmate participants, which has proven to be beneficial in many cases. During the sessions, every effort is made to establish a rapport with the youth. When needed, a verbal confrontation may be used by a S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. member to deal with a specific youth. This verbal contact has opened up problem areas which otherwise could have gone undetected. Also included in the S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. session is a tour of the lower exercise yard where the youth come in close proximity of mainline inmates, where the youth are offered graphic descriptions of life and existence at San Quentin. The youth also have the opportunity to tour housing units where they experience being placed in a cell for a period of time.

S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. like many programs in San Quentin State Prison has planted a seed and nurtured a relationship with its outside community creating an environment that is safe for communities to come in and be educated with this incarcerated community. In most cases, parents of teenagers who have trouble with their youth may seek advice from many sources: psychologists, psychiatrists, family counselors, teachers and judges. But few go to a source that speaks with the voice of experience about impulsive acting out and its consequences-incarcerated men, who have committed serious offenses. These men have invaluable information on the cause, as well as the devastating affect, of their behavioral problems.

If you have any questions regarding the San Quentin S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. program please contact:

Marie Rodesillas:
415-454-1460 ext: 5382
Ernie Pulliam:
415-454-1460 ext: 5348

Communities Unite – Promote Health Care

By The T.R.U.S.T.

In an environment created of iron, stainless steel, cinder blocks and concrete, are an accumulation of men who have committed a mixture of crimes ranging from drug dealing and petty theft to kidnap and murder. In this cruel, man made environment, live individuals who don’t follow the rules, disobey laws and simply don’t get along well with other men and women who are their polar opposites (law-abiding citizens). When we walk down streets, people clench their property and in some occasions, cross the street all in the fear of being robbed or criminally violated in some manner. Currently housed in a population of approximately 5,300, we, the incarcerated men of San Quentin State Prison are viewed as individuals whom society must be protected from. As an incarcerated man, this reporter can happily and easily contest that we are not the cancers of society. But don’t take my word for it; instead, allow me to share with you an interesting dynamic that is in place here at San Quentin State Prison.

On this cool May morning, I was blessed with the opportunity to participate in San Quentin State Prison’s 6th Annual Health Fair. This is an event that is hosted by the San Quentin T.R.U.S.T. for the Development of Incarcerated Men in conjunction with the National Trust for the Development of African American Men, the Alameda County Health Department and the Urban Male Health Initiative. The purpose of this event is to promote “Good Health” within self, family and community and to educate the incarcerated men in chronic health issues pertaining to gender, race and age. Every year, Dr. Arnold Chavez of the Alameda County Health Department pours his heart and soul into the recruitment of Health Care professionals for our annual health fair. What was once the hardest sell in the world for Dr. Chavez, has easily become an abundance of professionals who jump at the opportunity to participate in this annual event. Dr. Chavez remarks, “In the beginning, I was only able to get 10 – 15 Nurses and Health Specialists to participate in the event. Now I have over a 100 people each year who try to clear their calendars to participate in this day at San Quentin.” This year’s bunch of enthusiastic professionals included specialists providing information on Sexually

Transmitted Diseases (STD’s), Risk Reduction, Cancer, HIV/AIDS, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Nutritional Values Counseling, Blood Pressure testing, Body Mass Index, Glucose Testing, Cholesterol Testing and yes... Yoga! While Alameda County Health has always been at the forefront of volunteering, this year has brought a group of new faces. Entering the San Quentin health fair arena for the first time were doctors and interns from the University of California, San Francisco which provided information in the fields of Geriatrics and Nutrition (Healthy Choice Recipes). Mildred Crear, an Oakland native, has been in the Health Care profession for 44 years, currently heads the Black Nurses Association (BNA) and was manning the Glucose Testing table. Mildred, a Registered Nurse who is here for her third visit states, “I return each year to empower people, give information about health care so the men in San Quentin will know and understand their numbers (Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, Sugar and Body Mass).” Mildred continues by stating, “I hope the Receivership will improve the health care here in San Quentin and perhaps work together with outside organizations to help this process. Mildred went out on a limb by stating, “Maybe they will make the food better.” Bless her heart! During Mildred’s first visit, she was very skeptical about coming to San Quentin because she feared the unknown. At the end of our day, I was able to ask Mildred how she felt and she responded by simply stating if she could, she would take us all home with her. When she comes in she feels... Comfortable! And has no concerns while she is here and has stated that she feels safer here then she does in her own community at times.

While the focus today is strictly on promoting health, Dr. Gary Mendez, executive director of the National Trust, states in a speech provided to the population attending the fair, In making this statement Dr. Mendez lays down a challenge to the incarcerated men to make a change; and they respond. In droves, the men of San Quentin start showing up and participating in the different booths. As you make your way around the makeshift, “Medical Complex,” a picture of unity shows very clearly,. Outside in the front yard, where

rows of tables are lined up with professionals providing valuable information to the incarcerated men, genuine smiles, pleasantries and gestures are exchanged by both sides. Those people who were once afraid to be around us are now excited about having us around them. If you paid close attention, you actually saw several members of the T.R.U.S.T. actually working side by side with health care professionals assisting in not only passing out information, but sharing their own health experiences with other members of the incarcerated population thus giving the men a face they can put on this experience.

Katchie Ananda, a 20-year veteran yoga instructor, was asked about her experiences here at San Quentin and how she felt about being here. Her response was simple... “I am just happy to be able to give to your community.” You can see this by the way she consistently kept a full room during the fair as she was teaching men different techniques in breathing, medication, relaxation and concentration. Katchie is here on her second visit to the Health Fair, but is actually a Brown Card holder here at the prison. She remains very active with our population as she teaches yoga class on Fridays. What was probably the warmest part of my day, was watching Ms. Arnette Hayes. Arnette was providing information regarding STD’s and clearly had the most active booth. Arnette, also on her second visit, clearly accepted the role of the “Mother” to the younger members of our population. Her demeanor: cool and calm... And in control.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the picture being painted to you is just a simple artist’s stroke of the brush when compared to the larger mural that has been created... While the focus was on health, this day showed two communities working together hand in hand to accomplish a common goal: promoting good health and a healthy lifestyle. This reporter has witnessed all six fairs that have been presented to the San Quentin population and as an incarcerated man, it is always a pleasure to be present when they take place. It is during these days that we the population show that we may have been a cancer at one period in our lives, but now we are in remission creating a healthy body and soul.

DON’T QUIT (2008) By Mona/Texas T.

When the funds are low and the debts are high
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don’t you quit.
Life is strange with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about,
When he might have won had he stuck it out;

Don’t give up though the pace seems slow ,
You may succeed with another blow.
Success is failure turned inside out ,
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you can never tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you’re hardest hit,
That you must not quit.

SHAKESPEARE’S BEST PERFORMANCE

Michael B. Willis

Wow! We made front page news in the Marin Independent Journal (March 04, 2008, Tuesday), for performing Shakespeare’s “Much to do About Nothing.” Who would’ve thunk it? Well, truth be told, I wouldn’t have believed it before June 2005. Me, quoting Shakespeare!? In prison? Believe it or not, that’s just what I’m doing now. Using terms like, “then, though o’er, etc...”

This all began for me walking through SQ’s Arts in Correction’s Door looking for their Creative Writing Class. There stood the then “Director,” Johnathan Gonzales, and his two students J.B. Wells and Ronin Holmes. Boy, were they smooth and cordial. I informed them that I was looking for the Creative Writing Class (Ronin provided me with the

information because he was also a participant in the group). So they encouraged me to recite some of my poems, and I’ve been with our troupe ever since.



The first piece I performed was Jacques (7 Ages of Man) “All the World’s a Stage” from “As You Like It.” This is also where I met Professor Aldo Billingsley from Santa Clara University Arts and Theater Department. Suffice it to say,

he is a giant in comparison to myself in height (and on the stage). He and his students from Santa Clara performed scenes from “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

Our group has grown and we’ve changed directors to Suraya Keating (who challenges us to reach our potential). I would’ve never imagined the impact that performing classical literature could have on my life. I returned to school and obtained my GED and I’m presently nine classes away from receiving my AA College Degree. My attitude and outlook on life have changed. I am not just ready for success, I’m prepared for it. I shall accomplish great things. Keep your eyes open and enjoy the show.

“LIKE ME”

abdul al lawqui

Listen Lil’ Homie... i’d rather have you like me, than to be like me, See, cause if you were like me, peace would be unlikely, See, i live in a world where its likely, some convict will knife me, or the guntower will snipe me, so I’d rather have you like me, than to be like me... i’m thinking...even if you were to like me, which is unlikely, you’d probably be shisty, still in the street’s going dumb being hiphpy, lowdown, dirty, just like me, aint nobody written me, my only contact is when somebody fight’s me, but even still, i’d rather have you like me, than to be just like me... i wish i could make feel my heart... its cold and icy, treacherous, just like prison life be, yet...you out there actin bad, yeah lil’ homie, you gon end up like me, a has been, a might be, or in the cell wit some bandit tryin to make his wifey, liven life could be

done easily, yet instead we choose to struggle and live deviently, over lookin all of life’s possibilities, then have the odaciety, to ask the question why me, See, i’d rather have you like me, that to be just like me... look thru my eyes and you’ll see a color that’s bloody, walk in my shoe’s you’ll need boot’s cause its muddy, strip naked, squat and cough, spread you cheeks everyday made to feel dirty, simply, i’d rather have you like me, that to be just like me... not mindin nobody, not liven honestly, cost me my family, rejected by society, got me hatin everybody, MATTER FACT! i don’t want you to like me, hate me and berate me, cause in the end, i’d rather see you you liven nicely, instead of liven life in prison, JUST LIKE ME...

OVERALL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Helen Ameeta Singh

“If you have come to help me you’r are wasting your time...but if you have come because you liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

I was honored to be asked to write for the SQN. My hope is that this can be a space that helps facilitate healing and change. The above quote came from the (Australian) Aboriginal Political Activist Group in the 1970s. It is this spirit that I would like to introduce myself. My name is Helen Ameeta Singh; I am a therapist and have been fortunate enough to co-facilitate a group on mental and emotional health and wellness for the “TRUST” here at San Quentin. I look forward to creating a space to talk about some of the things that impact our overall health and wellness, which I see as being made up of the physical, spiritual, and mental/emotional as-

pects of us.

Physical health is how our bodies are functioning and feeling. It includes things like nutrition; what we are eating; where exercise fits into our daily lives; any medical conditions we may be struggling with.

Our spiritual health and well being is made of our individual beliefs around what sustains us. It helps give our lives meaning and keep us going, especially in the really tough times. Being connected to what gives our lives meaning is important to our overall health and wellness because it allows us to continue to stay connected to our own humanity as we exist within systems of oppression (such as the prison environment) that seek to dehumanize us.

Our mental/emotion health is how we think, fell and

act as we cope with life. It helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices in our lives. As we increase understanding about ourselves and what motivates our behaviors, we become more able to make changes to those behaviors that are negatively impacting us.

Being incarcerated, is very challenging to a person’s well being in many ways. Think about those three aspects of your overall health and wellness. How healthy is your body, spirit and mind right now? Are any of your behaviors causing harm to any of these parts of you? How do you support and nurture these different aspects of your overall health and wellness in the challenging situations that you’re in?

Until next time, peace and blessings...Helen.

SAN QUENTIN GIANTS
“WINNING” SEASON

David Marshall

The San Quentin Giants have managed to win more than they’ve lost, so far. This past Saturday (May 31, 2008) there was a sense of “wow” that the “Santa Monica Suns” had come over 500 miles just to play the game we all love, Baseball!

While the San Quentin Giants have plenty of dirt to overturn before they can claim they’re real contenders, thoughts of the Suns seemed to be that of, “No problem here.”

The Suns had their struggles, as did the San Quentin Giants, but, after 5 innings, it was 9-0 (San Quentin Giants). With Chris Rich on the hill, it was the 3rd time around for the Suns batting order, and they got to Chris and produced some runs. Our coach, Kevin, pulled Chris to be succeeded by Marvin, who pitched for 2 innings, and walked 5 batters, and

hit 2 batsmen. Marvin appeared upset the coach pulled him, but what coach wouldn’t.

The Suns scored, San Quentin Giants then tacked on a few more, and it came down to the 8th and 9th innings. San Quentin Giants up by 7 runs, the Suns rallied for 3 in the 8th, and 2 in the 9th. With the score 13-11, San Quentin Giants, the Suns had the tying run at 2nd base, 2 outs, and the count 3-2. The Santa Monica Suns popped up to end the game, final score 13-11, San Quentin Giants.

It seems that all the San Quentin Giants want to do is just play baseball, the re-living of that old childhood game. Those flashbacks of fame, and the need for trusting each other and the losing of sleep about this or that. Really, though, what San Quentin needs, is the best 9 threw 9 innings.

SHARED EXPERIENCE
CO-EDITOR: MICHAEL HARRIS

It has been said on many occasions, “If these walls could talk, what stories would flow from them.” Well, San Quentin now finds itself in a unique position to once again have its walls speak. For the benefit of future generations the San Quentin News is here, for everyone to share/express their thoughts, experiences, and ideas of the past and present.

The human beings that are encapsulated inside these prison walls have the power to change themselves, as well as influence others in positive ways. Some of us will never get out and others will. What has become the obvious is that we *can* learn from our mistakes, and so *can* others, *if* we, as a community, are brave enough to share in this undertaking.

San Quentin News intends to

be the vehicle to communicate what’s going on inside that impact our lives. At the same time, to convey our hopes and dreams to an outside world.

As a prisoner/human myself, I know that we are products of our life’s experience. It is not our individual, or collective, faults. When it comes to the behavioral information we receive from birth, and our various environmental back-grounds, we must deal with the cards in our hands. Nevertheless, we are responsible for our actions which have produced our different incarcerations. Yet, *all* humans are responsible for the present. The question *now* is what will you do? What, about the knowledge of life, will you share?

Special thanks to: *san* Quentin Print Shop

Coming Next Issue:
-More on Integration
-What’s up Digital TV?
-Convict to Warden
-SQ Film Production
-Graduation Ceremony

Send Submission to:
Education Dept. / SQ News
Death Row Stories Welcome

San Quentin News
USPS 4870-700

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Thanks for all the help from everyone!
Printed by the students in the Vocational
Printing Program

A SURVIVING SOUL

Dominique McDowell
The Healing Circle/No More Tears

They say when death nears, your priorities change; so with my experience with that, I have a question: What is your hope in the face of death?

I see a lot of people live on hope, but it’s truly a hopelessness because the hope never manifests to become true: “They just don’t believe in miracles!”

I live with the homeless, I play in the dirties playground populated with bodies whose souls has slipped through the cracks of communities and end up stripped of all essence. What you see in me, or what you see

in you is all that’s left after the soul has been tested, degraded, mis-lead, lied to , forgotten, slandered, abused, neglected, manipulated, and looked down upon. And what hurts the most is: “I don’t even know how to cry.” All of my tears have been handcuffed years ago, so don’t act like you don’t feel my pain in this diabolical scheme of soul-snatchin. So be prepared for sacrifice, it builds character. My soul always tells me that, and, plus deep inside I know, if I wasn’t built for this I’d be dead by now.

“Things do not change;
we change.”
--Henry David Thoreau

“Learn to behave from
those who cannot.”
—Sanskrit

San Quentin News

THE PULSE OF SAN-QUENTIN

VOL. 2008 NO. 2

AUGUST 27, 2008

SAN QUENTIN, CALIFORNIA 94964

POPULATION: 5,274

Hope Realized Coming Through the Front Gate

By: David Marsh
& Michael R. Harris

With a message of hope and inspiration for the graduates of the San Quentin Education Department's 2008 class, Willie Rahman Green returned to the institution from which he was released only 90 days ago. Only this time, as Green pointed out to an attentive audience of over 300 gathered in the Garden Chapel, his entrance to the prison had been made through the front gate as an invited guest, while his previous trip to San Quentin prison had begun thru R&R while wearing handcuffs.

"What I bring back is hope and a message to the men here at San Quentin," Green told the packed crowd. "You don't have to keep coming through R&R to come back to prison. You can come through the front gate!" Green received a special invitation to deliver the commencement speech to an audience which included graduates of the GED, vocational and college programs, their relatives, staff of the Education Department, and various prison officials including Warden Robert Ayers. If the three minute ovation he received was any indication, his message was well received by those in attendance.

After serving more than 25 years of a 33 years-to-life term for a murder

Green says he did not commit, Green walked out of S.Q. a free man after a Los Angeles county superior court judge threw out his conviction after ruling that a key prosecution witness had lied during the trial. Prosecutors declined to retry the case. Green says that he is slowly adjusting to the pace of life on the outside, and is not bitter against anyone, including the witness who lied during his trial.

The audience listened attentively to a man who only recently was himself a 14 year-long resident of North Block. During his time behind the walls at San Quentin prison, Green became heavily involved in many of the programs run by the Education Dept. as both student and tutor, giving and receiving.

Many in the audience know him personally through one of his many roles as friend, fellow student, tutor, associate or mentor. Green has himself graduated with an Associate of Arts



Willie Rahman Green and Julio Medina after the graduation

degree from Patten University through the Prison University Project at San Quentin. And by doing so, he became one of the 74 men who have received liberal arts degrees through the program.

In addition to his involvement as a student, his determination to help others achieve their own goals and to realize their dreams led him to become a tutor for Project R.E.A.C.H., an acronym for Reach for Education, Achievement and Change with Help. R.E.A.C.H. trains inmate volunteers as tutors. Green used his math skills to help many fellow inmates to develop academically, including one of the three valedictorians of this year's graduating classes.

Green was one of the founding members of the San Quentin T.R.U.S.T. (Teaching Responsibility Utilizing Sociologi-

cal Training). The T.R.U.S.T. is a group of ethnically diverse men whose goal is to educate and empower inmates to assist them for a successful transition to a non-incarcerated life. The group also works with various citizen groups and elected officials in the communities of Richmond and Oakland in an effort to reduce crime, violence and recidivism, and to prepare inmates from these communities for reintegration back into the community. Green served the group for over five years, including the past two as chairman.

For Green, life outside the prison walls does not mean an end to involvement with the causes that came to play such a prominent role in his life. He remains in close contact with David Cowan, the man whom he mentored and prepared to succeed him as the chairman of T.R.U.S.T.. Green's plans are to remain active networking with the various community groups, and in the recruitment

of personnel for the organization. "I learned never give up, never give up hope, and never allow anyone to define you," Green told his listeners, who can, perhaps, define who Green is most aptly by looking at the man he has become, during, and despite, his long period of incarceration.

Julio Medina, himself an ex-convict who served 12 years in New York's Sing Sing prison, also spoke to the graduates, and emphasized the education he received during his incarceration as the foundation for what his life has become today. Medina, the Executive Director/Founder and CEO of **Exodus Transitional Community, Inc.**, or E.T.C., earned a Master's Degree from the New York Theological Seminary, and is presently enrolled as a candidate of that school's Doctoral program.

Medina's organization is a faith-based re-entry program that has helped over 3,000 ex-convicts, both male and female, transition back into the community. E.T.C. provides counseling, employment preparation, job, housing, health and education referrals, court and parole assistance and computer training. Medina founded E.T.C. in 1999.

"Education," said Medina "is the most significant thing that is going to help us when we get back to the communities." His message, much like Green's, resonated with hope to those wearing blue in the audience. "I started from behind prison walls, I think that's what's important," he added.

Medina credited education as the most critical component in state's rehabilitation efforts and attempts to make substantial cuts in inmate recidivism rates. Education, he emphasized, empowers inmates to make changes in their own lives, and only with that power can the cycle be broken.

"Let's stop allowing other people to solve our problems," Medina told the audience. "We solve our own problems!"

MARCHING FORWARD

By Kenneth R. Brydon

On June 19, 2008, the entire education department was closed to in order to allow the staff to attend a graduation ceremony in the Garden Chapel. Those who had spent their time and efforts in improving their own lives, were recognized by the San Quentin administration for their hard work accomplished in attaining diplomas in the areas of GED, vocations, Associate of Arts and Bachelor of Art.

All who came to the podium were loudly applauded for their accomplishments. Depending upon their individual accomplishments, they were handed their diplomas by those who had seen them through. Many families were in attendance. Loud shouts erupted from the various areas where particular members were seated, but everyone was applauded loudly.

Steve Welch completed his graduation from Machine Shop, actually requesting that his parole (on graduation day) come in the evening so that he could attend the ceremony. Eleven individuals were handed their Vocation certificates by Vice Principle of Vocations, William Reeves.

Marvin Mitchell was the valedictorian of the 34 inmates in attendance who received their General Education Diploma ("GED"). Mitchell received the highest scores of those who had been tested this past year. Certificates were handed out by Chris Wittick and Phil Leonida.

Michael Carter was valedictorian for the 2008 graduating

class for the six recipients of the Patten University Associate of Arts degree. The college here at San Quentin is operated without any taxpayer support. A long list of volunteers from all walks of life make up the faculty of the "Prison University Project" ("PUP"). Jody Lewen and Jennifer Scaife are the PUP coordinators.

Of particular note in this years graduation is Vince Russo. Russo completed requirements for his bachelor's degree through Ohio University. After finishing his AA



Vince Russo, Michael Carter
&
Marvin Mitchell

degree, Russo then began his studies to complete the more advanced degree in January 2005.

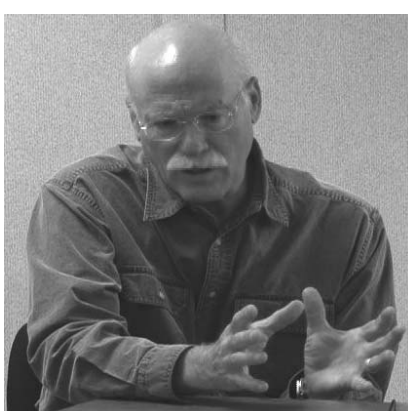
Cookies and refreshments followed the ceremony, and the proud families were able to have photos taken together. Many who spoke to the audience told of their journey, and how it gave them motivation to keep moving forward, and for setting higher goals for their lives. To each and every one, much kudos are deserved; further recognition of the completion of even higher educational goals is expected of those who remain here.

TOBIAS WOLFF SPEAKS TO US

'We choose how to behave; no other animal does that.'

By: Kenneth R. Brydon

If you were standing in line for tryouts for American Idol, and they pulled you aside and sat you down with Bruce Springsteen to talk, that would be about how it felt to have a conversation with Tobias Wolff. For his many accomplishments in writing, he is considered a Literary Icon. In addition, he is a Vietnam Veteran, an



Army Green Beret, a B.A. Graduate from Oxford (with honors), a reporter for the Washington Post, and currently directs the English and Creative Writing department at Stanford University.

Wolff was the featured guest for Judy Breen's "Video Literacy Project." Professor Breen is doing a series of video interviews being aired on San Quentin

Television to promote literary reading. "Literary Work" is writing that is believed to have a depth of meaning that speaks to generations. Ms. Breen made the necessary connections for him to be among us.

See: Tobias Wolff Page #5

SAN QUENTIN PRISON MEDICAL

By the Medical
Department Staff

NEW FACES IN MEDICAL

Dr. Tootell, the previous CDCR Central Regional Medical Director and consultant with UCSF, has joined San Quentin Prison as the new Chief Medical Officer (“CMO”). She is well-versed in correctional medicine and is glad to become part of the new San Quentin Prison Medical Team.

Dr. Pratt has also joined San Quentin Prison as the Chief Physician and Surgeon. She also worked as a consultant for UCSF, and was the Medical Director of public health clinics in San Francisco. She has extensive experience with correctional medicine, addition medicine, and primary care physicians.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Medical Receiver in charge of medical upgrades has a web site at: www.cprinc.org.

PHARMACY OPERATIONS UP-GRADE

As one of the many steps being taken by the Office of the Receiver, San Quentin Prison is in the process of upgrading the Pharmacy operations with the installation of a new computer software program. SQ is the seventh institution within CDCR to receive this program. This software came on-line here on June 23, 2008. The installation of the new software program will not change what



New San Quentin Hospital construction built to accommodate original 1885 facade

on time.

If you do not report as instructed on the ducat, then you are subject to discipline as stated in Title 15 § 3014, “Call and Passes.” However, it is not our desire in health care to write you up, but to provide necessary or requested health care services. When you don’t show up as ducated, you put your own health at risk and may need more extensive care or treatment later on, which could have been avoided if you had reported to the health care as scheduled. Additionally, if you don’t report as scheduled, you just took away an appointment from another inmate-patient who could have been scheduled and seen by health care staff.

You need to report even if you don’t want the assistance or care. Health care staff want (and need) to make sure you understand the decision you are

making by not being seen or treated. Health care staff will educate you on what could happen if you are not seen or treated. It is your decision, but the job as health care professionals is to ensure that you are informed of what could happen. If you don’t want treatment it will not be forced upon you and health care staff will ask you to sign a CDCR Form 7225, “Refusal of Treatment” form.

Please do not submit duplicate requests for the same reason, as this only slows down the review and scheduling of necessary appointments and puts everyone behind in ensuring that all patients are seen as soon as possible.

Additionally, the CDCR For 7362, “Health Care Services Request,” is not to be used to ask questions such as, “When am I going to be scheduled?” or “When am I going out to the specialist?” The CDCR Form 7362 is only to be used to request health care services and not as a way of trying to get information.

SAN QUENTIN PRISON’S MEDICAL FACE-LIFT

There is construction aplenty at SQ these days, as the Receiver moves forward with plans to improve medical delivery and support space.

All systems are go to proceed with the creating of the five-story “Central Health Services Center,” providing 50 beds, mental health, and dental services, clinics, R&R, administration, lab, X-ray, medical records, and pharmacy for the entire institution. That \$146 million project will become a reality in the year 2010.

Soon, a modular unit for clinical and administrative space will open on the upper yard. Another project – to build out the West and East Block rotundas for clinics – is on its way. We are also working on the design for a new personnel building and a medical warehouse.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

A complete copy of the “Statewide Inmate Medical Services Program Policies and Procedures, Volume 4, Chapter 4, Access to Primary Care,” can be found in the Law Library, if you want additional details regarding this process.

ROUTINE CHECKUPS & SCREENING FOR INMATES

By: Dr. Alvarez

Routine checkups can find health problems early. For many health problems, early treatment can help prevent more serious problems. A “screen” is a test used to look for a disease that has not already been found or diagnosed. Screens are recommended based on your age, health history and family health history.

The advice listed below is based on guidelines designed by the American Academy of Family Physicians and the U.S. Preventive Health Task Force. They are guidelines for how often you should see your health care provider for routine exams and tests. These schedules should be used for “well care.” If you have any ongoing health problems, you will need checkups more often.

A dental exam should be done every 6 months to 1 year in all men.

Blood pressure and weight should be checked every 2-3 years in healthy men age 18-39, and every year for men age 40 and over.

Cholesterol should be checked every 5 years starting at age 35, or earlier in men with risk factors for heart disease.

Blood sugar should be checked every 3 years to look for diabetes.

Men over 40 may need to have exams of the skin to look for skin cancer, they should ask their doctor if this is necessary.

Men over 50 should have their stool tested for blood every year and/or a colonoscopy (using a camera to look into the colon) every 10 years. Both of these tests are used to search for colon cancer.

There is a lot of debate about the need for prostate cancer screening with a “PSA” blood test. Men over 50 should ask

their doctor if they need this test.

Men over 50 should have a check for hearing and an eye exam every 1 to 3 years.

All men should be screened for HIV even if they don’t have any risk factors, according to the Center for Disease Control.

People with diabetes and high blood pressure are recommended to have additional screening tests, because they are at higher risk to get certain diseases, such as, heart attacks, blindness and kidney disease. In Diabetics, a Hemoglobin A1C (blood test) is needed every 6 months and a foot exam should be done at each doctor visit. In both diabetics and people with high blood pressure a screen for protein in the urine is needed. This test looks for early kidney damage. A cholesterol test and an eye exam should be done once per year in people with diabetes or high blood pressure.

What immunizations do I need to get?

As an adult, you should have the shots listed below:

- * flu shot every year, especially if you are over 50 years old
- * tetanus (Td) booster shot every 10 years
- * varicella (chickenpox) shot twice in your lifetime. You need this shot if you have never had a varicella (chickenpox) shot and you do not know if you ever had chickenpox disease.
- * pneumonia shot at age 65 or sooner if you have a chronic disease like diabetes.

If you have questions or health concerns, feel free to fill out a 7362, request for health care services, to discuss these matters with your primary care provider.

The health care staff is looking forward to this improvement and is excited about getting into the 21st Century.

medications you are prescribed by your Primary Care Provider. It will not change where you pick up your medications or how the medications are administered. What the software will do is improve the health care services to the entire population. The medical staff will be able to better track all of your medication needs as well as to respond quicker to any problems related to medication administration. The health care staff is looking forward to this improvement and is excited about getting into the 21st Century.

HEALTH CARE DUCATS

Inmate movement throughout the institution is scheduled via the inmate ducat system, including health care appointments. Our health care staff submits their list of inmate-patients they want to see each day to the Inmate Assignment Office. Inmate Assignments generates the ducats issued to each inmate-patient.

Once you receive the health care ducat, it is your responsibility to report to the health care appointment at the designated time. All health care ducats are priority ducats and allow you to leave your assignment or not report to your assignment in order to report to your health care appointment

making by not being seen or treated. Health care staff will educate you on what could happen if you are not seen or treated. It is your decision, but the job as health care professionals is to ensure that you are informed of what could happen. If you don’t want treatment it will not be forced upon you and health care staff will ask you to sign a CDCR Form 7225, “Refusal of Treatment” form.

REQUESTS FOR HEALTH CARE SERVICES

All health care services, including Medical, Mental Health, and Dental, that you need are requested by submitting a CDCR Form 7262, “Health Care Services Request.” Copies of this form are available to you in the housing units as well as all clinic areas. When you wish to see a health care staff member, you need to complete the form and place it in the designated sick call box within your housing unit.

Health care staff (usually a nurse) picks up the requests on a daily basis and reviews each one. The nurse makes a decision, based upon what you write on the form, if you need to be seen that day (urgent care needed), the following day, or forwards the request to Dental, Mental Health, or other health care service areas for action.

CONDOMS ON THE LINE?

By: Kenneth R. Brydon

On Sept. 01, 2008, Solano State Prison will be a part of a year-long pilot project dispensing condoms to prisoners.

In one of those examples of when the right hand isn’t agreeing with the left, prisoners will be permitted to have in your possession a “sealed” condom, but, should the seal be broken, the prisoner will be subject to a write-up. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed a bill which would have required California prisons to allow non-profit and public health agencies to distribute “sexual barrier protection devices.”

Much opposition comes from many in the prison administration who see it as an easy step to authorizing same-sex prisoners to engage in sexual activities. Yet, infection rates of HIV and STD’s in state and federal prisons are five times greater than in the free population. The non-profit “Center for Health Justice” has been asked to facilitate the program. Condom machines will be placed in “discrete” locations at the prison.

HEALTH FACTS

From: Minnesota Correctional Facility
Oak Park Heights

Each year the number of emergency rooms shrinks. This is true in spite of a rising need for more emergency care. Patients are waiting an alarming 36 percent longer than they did in 1997.

The makers of Vytarin, a cholesterol drug, have completed a two year study on the drug’s effectiveness. It was concluded that the drug failed to benefit patients at all. It is being investigated by authorities to determine if the long delay in announcing the findings was financially motivated. An estimated five million patients have been taking the drug.

THE SQ PROBLEM OF INTEGRATION

Kenneth R. Brydon

On August 14, 2008, the following administrative staff were present at the Town Hall meeting in the Protestant chapel: Warden Robert Ayers Jr., Chief Deputy Warden Max Lemon, Associate Warden John Curzon, Community Resource Manager Laura Bowman, Captain Cahayla, Captain Dorsey, Lieutenant Luna, and Sergeant Lowe (aka, “Smokey”). The question being addressed was “how” integration is going to happen at San Quentin. 30 questions were submitted to the administration in advance that were given to the MAC by prisoners in the general population. The questions and the administration’s answers were handed out to the audience. MAC Chairman, Sammy Johnson, read the questions and Chief Dep. Warden Lemon was designated to read off the answers and further explain them for the purposes of clarity and for subsequent airing on SQTV.

The following is a summary of the answers to these questions:

- Progressive disciplinary action will be taken on those who refuse to comply.
- Case factors and prior prison conduct will be used, when and where verified.
- If you have a cellmate when this is implemented, you’ll keep him.
- There will be no accommodations for religious beliefs, or sexual orientation.
- A bed can be lost, even if returned to the prison the same day from the hospital.
- A bed can be lost if out to court for less than a day.
- This is not intended to ignite a racial incident.
- MAC will continue to have representatives from each race.
- Lock downs will be accommodated.

Those with ADA issues will continue to be accommodated.

During the Town Hall meeting, there was an opportunity given for individuals from the population to step up to an open-mic to ask more questions. Robert Beckett asked the question that was given the most applause by the audience of over 300: “Why wasn’t this begun at

the Level IV Prisons where the real problems are going to be?” Warden Ayers chose to respond to the question, saying that he agreed in substance that it is a problem. And he felt that it would have been better to begin there, rather than at a Level II prison. He spoke about those prisoners on an “Honor Yard” in Lancaster Prison, who, if they were removed from the program due to disciplinary action, were subject to retaliation for the positive choices

and that he ought to have the choice to decide whom he would cell-up with.

Of very clear concern to the many Lifers interviewed, was the issue of trust. A White Lifer explained, “I’ve got no problem with living with another race, but if I came home to find some knuckle-head sitting on my bed, drinking my coffee, eating my food, and reading a letter from my wife (while looking at her photo), it’s going to be a problem...” Another Lifer stated that he felt that there should be some chance for guys, who at least have a lot of clean time (time without any disciplinary problems), to be able to get some sort of a “convenience move” if they have a person they simply aren’t compatible with.

They are all concerned that, should they be confronted with a person from another race who lacks in respect for them, and a fight comes from it, they’ll find themselves confronted with others of the same race coming to their aid. “They want to just look at the race,” said a Black man, “and that we should get along as they do in the rest of society, but, in that society, they wouldn’t live with a person who has nothing in common with them.”

The resulting problem of being confronted with a person whom we refuse to share space with, then results in disciplinary action being taken. Lifers, with decades of “clean time,” are suddenly placed in the position of having to face a Parole Board that now views them as being “anti-social.” Meanwhile, they may well already be on a baseball team, in a group, and working with that same race year after year.

Many of North Block Lifers see that, having shown themselves to be highly responsible, they will now be forced to live shoulder to shoulder with a person who’s failed to take responsibility for his own life. From everything in the news, integration is coming, and from it, some difficult questions have yet to be considered. Balancing the inevitable change of life, with the need for a degree of certainty in the way things will operate, isn’t yet clear.

From everything in the news, integration is coming, and from it, some difficult questions have yet to be considered.

they had made.

What mostly came from the number of people who spoke was that this process didn’t make any sense to them, and that there seemed to be more being put into the policy than what the settlement indicated. Chief Dep. Warden Lemon stated that the terms of the settlement were being followed. Warden Ayers interjected that if these terms were not acceptable, then individuals ought to appeal the decision.

An interview of prisoners on the Lower Yard from differing races resulted in some interesting commentary on the issues. Most of the problems didn’t focus on the race of the individual, but more on the issues of values and respect.

A Lifer, who lives near the Lieutenant/Sergeant’s office stated: “They’ve already got enough people coming up to complain about the cellie they got.” He went on to say that the amount of problems, “With your own race,” that are already a part of trying to live in a cell the size of a closet, would be 10-times worse if they added in another race. It was not the color of the skin which concerned most, but the values that the person held.

A Black Lifer, having served over 30 years, said, “If the guy comes in my cell, of any race, bringing with him stupidity (drug & alcohol use, weapons, gang-activity), he’s coming right back out!” This was the sentiment of a Hispanic Lifer, who, with over 20 years served, said that he understood that the integration was not supposed to be “forced,”

TOWN HALL COMMENTARY

By: Pastor Morris Curry
Protestant Chapel Chaplain

On Thursday August 14, 2008, the San Quentin Garden Chapel was used to hold a Town Hall meeting with the administration. I was in attendance of this, and I came away wondering why a few people were enslaving the majority? What I mean by that, is that I saw, as a child of the 60s, a few people ruling the majority. This was pretty much the same situation in South Africa. This idea that segregation is a good thing is a Satanic and evil ideology of separation.

These people have found a way to rule others and make them do things that they ordinarily wouldn’t do in public. Why didn’t someone step up and tell us that we’re not going to allow these individuals to tell us what we’re to do?

Don’t you want to leave prison? Are you saying that you don’t care that your families are waiting for you? I cannot count the number of men who came in to me in private, and told me they want to get out of the gangs. They know the life style they’re living is wrong, but they don’t believe they can back away from it. From what I see, this is the time and place for them to do it. There are only a few people benefiting from this arrangement, and the rest are suffering by it.

Executions Resume

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Coalition For Prisoner’s Rights

On April 16, 2008, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that lethal injection as practiced in Kentucky is not “cruel and unusual punishment” under the U.S. Constitution. The case is *Baze v. Rees*, no. 07-5439. Yet, this year, when the second place horse in the Kentucky Derby broke both front ankles and was euthanized, Supreme Court Justice Stevens remarked to a large group of lawyers that the horse probably died more humanely than do death row prisoners in Kentucky.

Just weeks later a federal judge in Delaware stayed executions there so she could consider the constitutionality of Delaware’s lethal injection procedures. By May 23, 2008, there had been two executions, one each in Georgia and Mississippi. Another May execution was scheduled in Virginia. Seven executions were scheduled for June and another six for July. Half of those to be executed are in Texas.

Coalition for Prisoner’s Rights, PO Box 1911, Santa Fe, NM 87504

“DIRTY BIRD!”

By: Kenneth R. Brydon

What do you get when you mix a drunk with a knife trying to teach a parrot to speak obscenities? You get a guy doing jail time and a parrot who slurs the “sh” pronunciations!

On Tuesday, July 22, Aaron McCoy was at the Salvation Army Thrift Shop trying to teach a bird how to speak all those “foul” words. Seeing that Mr. McCoy had a nine inch knife tucked into his waist band, the store employees called the police. The bird corrupter was arrested without incident; no word on whether the parrot’s beak needed to be washed out with soap.

“CAN I SEE SOME IDENTIFICATION, PLEASE?”

By: Kenneth R. Brydon

Once paroled from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, rebuilding a new life becomes a never ending request to show valid identification. Going to the DMV to try and get identification, immediately makes you suspect of being a terrorist who is attempting to “hide out” until called upon to blow up something. Assembly Bill 2099 may change all of that, providing everyone who is walking out the door with a valid ID.

Frank Russell, director of education, vocations and offender programs in CDCR, acknowledges that there is a serious gap in the parole process here. He stated that the most critical time of release, is in the first hours and days following release. Getting a job, applying for assistance, and the hundred other daily events people deal with, all begin with an ID.

Assemblywoman Loni Hancock argues that identification is the “sensible” thing to do and removes obstacles in the way of parolees. A test program has been proposed for Folsom State Prison, at a cost of \$55,000. Ms. Hancock points out that if it helps two inmates to stay out, then the state will have saved \$71,000.

Fair play is primarily not blaming others for anything that is wrong with us. - Eric Hoffer

Vitality shows not only in the ability to persist, but also in the ability to start over. - F. Scott Fitzgerald

The ultimate result of shielding men from the effects of folly is to fill the world with fools. - Herbert Spencer

PRISONER RESOURCES

(Publishes stories, poetry)
CALIFORNIA PRISON
FOCUS
2940 16th St. #B-5
San Francisco, CA 94103

(Writing Contest, Handbook)
PEN AMERICAN CENTER
Prison Writing Program
588 Broadway
New York, NY 10012

(Free Koran & Islamic Books)
ALAVI FOUNDATION
500 5TH AVE – STE 2310
New York, NY 10110

(Bible & Bible Studies)
“Pastor Melissa Scott” Ministry
P.O. Box #1
Los Angeles, CA 90053

(Christian Books)
HARVEST TIME BOOKS
PO Box 300
Altamont, TN 37301

(Spirituality - Bo Lozoff)
HUMAN KINDNESS
FOUNDATION
PO Box 61619
Durham, NC 27705

(Jewish Materials)
JEWISH SERVICES
PO Box 85840
Seattle, WA 98145-1840

(Meditation Courses)
PRISON PROJECT SYDA
PO Box 99140
Emeryville, CA 94662

SEND IN YOUR
SUGGESTIONS!

(Buddhist Meditation)
UPAYA OUTREACH
1404 Cerro Gordo Rd.
Santa Fe, NM 87501

(Prevention & Treatments)
HIV/HEP C IN PRISON COMMITTEE
California Prison Focus
2940 16th St #307
San Francisco, CA 94103

(Comprehensive Legal Issues)
PRISON LEGAL NEWS
2400 NW 80TH St. PMB #148
Seattle, WA 98117
\$18/yr or \$9/half-yr.

(Free Pen Pal listing)
Prison World Magazine
P.O. Box 380
Powder Springs, GA 30127

Reconnecting

By: Troy Williams



Troy Williams, Kenny Stallings, Buckshot Maples, Chris Shurn, Marv Andrews

Twenty-five years ago my mind did not fully grasp a connection to all of humanity. I could neither recognize potential nor power in the image that I viewed in the mirror. This hurt, angry and misguided child, traumatized by a host of environmental failures, was a lost-boy in America.

Fifteen years ago my mind did not fully comprehend a purpose in life. I lacked the knowledge, wherewithal and support needed to transcend the conditioned responses shaped within me from adolescence. Still hurt and angry, this confused young man stood at a crossroad with a vision for change but ultimately chose a self-

Today, it is with great honor, humility and acknowledgement of purpose that I introduce myself as a writer and filmmaker.

destructive path as a means to get there.

Less than one year ago I was completely disconnected from the means and resources required to fulfill the vision expressed in this article. Today, it is with great honor, humility and acknowledgement of purpose that I introduce myself as a writer and filmmaker.

I've written several short stories and movies scripts. Thanks to the collective imagination of visionaries, I've been given a second chance to mend some of the wounds caused by an unwise crossroad decision.

I often use script development as a way of expressing the creative voice of my imagination. Many writers use different methods to develop a story. I would like to take you on a journey through one of the processes I've used to draft a script for a docudrama.

Before we begin, let me walk you through a few preliminaries. A docudrama is a documentary type film that utilizes re-enactments of real life events. I've got a feel for an interesting story, its contradictions, its characters and their conflicts. I've thought about structure, meaning, and how everything changes over time. I'm ready to take a few notes.

This story is based, in large part, on individual life experiences. In essence, what I present here is a point of view that expresses a vision for transcendence.

The main ideas are framed in the form of questions the film will attempt to answer. Can the School of Hard Knocks produce fruit? How can the imagination be used to reconnect fallen fruit to the tree of humanity?

The binding thread that will run through this film is the concept of imagination. Lesson Six of Napoleon Hill's book entitled "The Law of Success" begins as follows: "IMAGINATION is the workshop of the human mind wherein old ideas and established facts may be reassembled into new combinations and put to new uses." This film will explore how old ideas and established facts have been reassembled, through the workshop of human minds, into new combinations and are now being put to new uses.

After the main ideas have been decided, they must be arranged into sequences. A

sequence is "a series of shots joined by some common elements."

*Central Idea: We see innocent children playing in a park, adolescents standing on an urban city street corner, news reports of crime levels, robbery up, murder rate up, education spending down, high school drop outs increased. The central idea that the writer wants to make is that our innocent children are being failed. Children are being left behind.

*Setting: We see a corporate board room, a prison yard, college classrooms barbed wire, camera equipment, school corridor, and video editing suite. Here the attempt is to link prison with the elements of a college that prepares individuals for the corporate world.

*Action: An inmate leaves a prison cell, checks in with the guard at a desk, walks into a video production class, greets his friends.

*Mood: Transformation has begun. Camera crews are filming. Inmates dialogue with at-risk youth via cinematic expressions about the consequences of negative behavior. Film screenings and focus groups are conducted. A teenager stands at a fork in a road. Here, the binding element is not just films but also the transcendence and posi-

tive attitude of the people and the setting.

Re-enactments will also be used to unify the sequences and emphasize perspectives.

The chronological progression of this film will be used to show the development of character over time, trials, and tribulation, how the face of prison culture has changed at San Quentin, and how the old ideas of behavior modification and cinematography have been reassembled into a new combination called Positive Image Modification.

Elements of a search motif are also included in the logical progression of this film. There is a deliberate exploration of discovery and inquiry into the effects of Positive Image Modification. The goal is to find solutions to the violence that plagues our communities.

The use of imagination is critical in visualization. The dictionary definition of imagination is, "the act or power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality. Visualization is the act or process of putting these mental images into visible form.

Here is where we consider the many possibilities of the visual interpretation of a point to be made in a sequence.

For example, the picture of KeKe standing in front of a row of obituaries accompanied by the following audio: "Wise Up. It Ain't Worth It."

This visual is an example of positive change in Mr. Markee Carter and it exemplifies the concept of Positive Image Modification. He is a man who has lived of the brink of self-destruction, sharing the wisdom of his experiences, in essence holding up a sign that reads, "Stop. Wrong way. Do not enter."

This film keeps in mind the cultural and emotional resonance of visualization.

1. Hip hop artist Lazarus (Marvin Mitchell) and Black Myth (Henry Montgomery) sit on a prison yard discussing life.

2. Two young men get into an argument over a CD player.



Prisoners acting out violence intervention on the prison yard.

Several other men join in on each side and everybody squares off to do battle.

3. Lazarus and Black Myth intervene with some con-



Markee (KeeKee) Carter Speaks about the consequences of violence.

scious hip hop lyrics before the men come to blows. "Take two steps to the left to elude death. It's roulette out in them streets so who's next. You choose best to leave the block and lose less than those dudes who bust shots and use meth."

4. Prison riot diverted. The men come together and settle their differences like thinking men.

The cultural and emotional resonance here takes us back to a time when hip hop was an endeavor of consciousness.

The opening of a film must hook the audiences' attention and quickly define what the film is going to be about.

This film will open with a re-dramatization sequence. A small child witnesses violence in the street as he walks home from school, his parents argue and fight in the home as he watches violence on television. The scene cuts to a takeover robbery. Several young men enter a place of business waving guns. "Everybody down. This is a robbery!" Sounds of police sirens echo in the background. These visuals are accompanied by personal testimony. "November 14, 1994, I was arrested on a 28-count criminal complaint that stemmed from a botched takeover robbery. Facing life in prison, I made a commitment to change. And I did change. January 27, 1995, all charges were dismissed." The scene dissolves to a man talking to a classroom full of students. "If I could do it all over again, I would of done things differently. I would have made different choices. Now, it's time to give back. We can take our experiences and create cinematic expressions that others can learn from so they don't have to make the same mistakes we did."

The title that appears over the man connecting an external microphone to a camera is: Re-Connected.

In order for the rhythm pace of this endeavor to be maintained, it is critical for all members of society to come together collectively as a network. So, whether it's a yard full of convicts who, when the clock strikes 6:10 p.m. on June 18, stop what they are doing and raise their hands in support of Silence the Vio-

lence Day. Or documenting how, after a prison riot, OGs formed a Day of Peace Committee that works to prevent violence. Or the making of a TRUST documentary that reflects the struggle of the work needed to be done. We need and appreciate your continued support. After all the negative press that presents prisoners as monsters it is important that intellectuals give balance to those images youth will model.

Also in the works is a presidential town-hall meeting for the purpose of forming human to human connections in order to explore the fears and possibilities surrounding what



Prisoner participating in a moment of silence on the prison yard.

may very well be America's first African American president. Viewers will see the prison population as a microcosm of America. Through a prisoners perspective the nation will realize how far we have come and how far we need to go. We hope to relay a message of who we think would best serve our disenfranchised communities.

In reality, the climax of this program is only reached with change in our communities. But for the purposes of the film we will end showing youth developing their own cinematic expressions and dialogue that bear witness to positive Image Modification. After all, everybody has a story to tell.

Today, I'm RE-CONNECTED because today I have a sense of purpose. I have a sense of who I am. I have a clear sense of direction. Thanks to the collective effort of visionaries, I can say that I have produced several short movies.

The message to be learned and presented in this article is that film discovers how the workshop of the human minds have been key instruments for reconnecting fallen fruit to the tree of humanity.

LIVING BETWEEN BREATHS

By STEPHEN LIEBB

For those of us sentenced to a life term, time is inexorable. Years pass and seem to bring us not closer to release while our bodies succumb to age. We are challenged to draw vitality and meaning from our circumstances.

A King of ancient Israel, Solomon, believed that everything has its perfect time and place. He wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:11, “He has made everything perfect in its time. Also he put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.”

Viktor Frankl, survived imprisonment in Nazi concentration camps and founded a

school of psychodynamics called, “Logotherapy,” which states that “meaning” is the central idea of human existence. He concluded that, “it did not really matter what was expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. Our answer must consist, not in talk and meditation, but in right action and right conduct. Life ultimately means taking responsibility to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual.”

We know that there is very little we can control or change in our environment. Our inability to change our situation challenges us to change ourselves.

Freedom is restricted by our conditions. But, we remain free to take a stand toward those conditions. Frankl wrote, “It is this spiritual freedom which cannot be taken away and that makes life meaningful and purposeful.”

Eternity exists between a single inhalation and exhalation. The Scriptures talk about the power and sanctity of the breath. The verse in Genesis that speaks of the “Spirit of God sweeping over the water,” (Genesis 1:2) uses the Hebrew word, “ruach,” which is the same word used for life. Job said, “the Spirit (ruach) of God formed me, the breath (neshama) of Shaddai sustains me.” Neshama, a word whose

root is used to describe breathing or a breath, is also used to denote a person’s soul or life. Genesis 2:7, describing the creation of man, stated, God “blew into his nostrils the breath of life (neshama).”

Through the wise and masterful instruction of James Fox, a Yoga instructor at San Quentin, I have begun to learn about the power of the breath of life. In Yoga, the vital force called “prana” is cultivated and moved through a series of “asanas,” physical movements combined with breathing exercises. This practice helps us to live one breath at a time. It is in quietness and stillness that time becomes an ally not a foe. It is in stillness that we begin to realize

the things that are important and those things that really do not matter. The truth that everything can change in a single instant becomes apparent.

Yoga and its emphasis on the power of a single breath promote a respect for life and a profound realization of the destructive force of violence. I have grown to understand that I extinguished the breath of another human being forever and denied him innumerable moments of peace, joy and being. We desire stability of spirit during these times of uncertainty and confusion. Learning to live between the breaths we take each moment is the path to that peace.

A flame Within *Tony Richard (aka Zakee the Poet)*

Brothers Let these words be an in inspiration Because similar situation We all facin Procrastination and same sex relation Is consistently risen among every nation? Locked up in prison Why? From poor decision making, Fast/cars and women we chasin Children having the power of annihilation With Satan instigation Creating stagnation People give Satan a vacation Why are we racin To an illusion Of our final destination Respect god’s creation Which is self? Where’s the consideration Is there any left I think not But guess what Hell is a place that is extremely hot... Fill to the top With sinners who refuse to stop Graveyards overflowin souls in the wind blowin not knowin Where their really goin That’s what I call a lost soul Notice me speakin in a religious aspect Hopin to reach

those who’re not there yet, due to the retardation of their mind-set Blind to the fact (that) all water is wet And religion has a strong impact Because it helps to keep people mentality intact Or at least I expect that, now lets reflect back towards the beginning When I mention sinning Why do we always see a Satan Grinning? Because he have everybody thinking they winning When they really losin Constantly sinning With drug abusin Chemical pollution Got us saturated in confusion Institution gangs being breded Women being mistreated But act conceded once they realize how much they needed I’m Knee-high In a puddle of tears I’ve cried /+from family and friends I lost over the years That’s been kilt or died/+ from pain that’s been inflicted upon me while I was Young and innocent some it could have

been prevented and some couldn’t Some of it should of happened and some of it shouldn’t If I could go back and change the things I’ve done wrong I probably wouldn’t Because over the years Bad experiences has ignited my vocal-cords streets is permanently red From all the blood its absorbed family scared to let they children play outside Because they feel it’s not safe outside anymore They fear that a stray bullet Might claim they Childs life And before their Child get a chance to live They die (Damn that ain’t right) The hope for are youth dreams for the future Is very very slim Because they grow up watching gangsta movies And the wanna be just like them They can’t be like daddy Because daddy never around Daddy in jail Or most likely Six feet in the ground...

I come from... *By CAMISHA FATIMAH (Facilitator of Keepin’ It Real)*

I come from... a handful of fist fights, in between confrontational nights. I come from... violence, physical pain, anger, revenge and resentment. I come from... feeling misunderstood most of my life. I come from... a defensive nature you would NOT believe. I come from... killing babies inside of me. I come from... late night walks in my neighborhood by myself, testing my survival skills. I come from... filling the emptiness within myself with drugs, men, money, food and anything else. I come from... insecurities about me. Simply being me. Without focusing on the complexities of me. The multilayer’s of me.

I ALSO come from... picketing coffee beans in Hawaii. I come from...traveling to distant lands through far off seas. I come from... working a construction job with a group of framers rebuilding Marin City. I come from...not eating grapes and strawberries during my childhood, cause of the constant picketing. I come from... the Jewish Community Center where I took tap, dance, jazz,

capiorera, gymnastics and swimming classes just to name a few I come from... two parents who were always in the public eye striving for the rights of human kind. I come from... being a baby.

And now I am a woman a culmination of all these things and more. I share these things with you because now I see. I am not just one thing. You are not just one thing. I am a culmination of a whole lot of things being. People influencing me. Helping me, get closer to the essential me. We are reflections of each other. If we were smart, we would learn from one another. In every exchange with others, seeing an opportunity for blessings. Growth, development and a chance to let go of all negativity, making room for positivity. Let’s let the positivity overwhelm us. Just like we let people’s response to us overwhelm us. Positivity can overwhelm us just like the anger, violence, pain, arrogance and ignorance overwhelmed us in the past. This is our pathway to get free. Free from ALL negativity. So

that when triggers appear and shatan gets near...

When the crossroads are here...we only have a second. No time for fear. When one second can change MANY future years. When we come to these crossroads we are equip and ready. To make clear, the real life of, no fear. Just sober decisions. Good decisions, not only for ourselves, but for all those who are near. *Good choices are easy. Greatness is here. Inside each and everyone of us.* And what are we doing if we are not tapping into that greatness. Every second, every minute, every hour of every day. Getting closer to our essential way. Put our hang ups on the shelf. Take a breathe, think and move. Do it movin’. Closer to who we really are, not limited to our current condition, not being our experiences. **But ALL are. Who we were and who we want to be.** And let’s LIVE in that, B! Be that! “All you can be” like they say in the army. Because I am a reflection of you. And you are a reflection of me. **And together we can ALL get free.**

Tobias Wolff at San Quentin

Continued from page #1

Four Lifers, Felix Lucero, J.B. Wells, Joseph Diggs, and myself were asked to sit down with Wolff on July 21, 2008 and address questions to him.

Those on The Row and North Block may have already had a chance to see the taped interview done with him. For a person who’s able to fill a huge auditorium to hear him speak, Wolff showed himself to be very down to earth. For all you people thinking of writing your own memoir, “This Boy’s Life” paved the way for what is now “The” way a memoir should be written. He turned the telling of one’s life story from a boring dictation into an emotion-filled account that brings the reader in to relive the experience with him.

Wolff sat down with me after taping the interview, and gave me a chance to ask him some questions for SQ News. J.B. Wells also participated, and asked questions of his own. The most current of his many publications is “Our Story Begins,” a collection of short stories. In the category of short literary fiction, Wolff has won many awards; and has frequently been published in the New Yorker magazine. His writing is a personal favorite of this writer.

Wolff was asked about what he might share with anyone who is setting out to become an accomplished writer. He spoke of the need for patience, and that (writers) tend to be better critics than writers of our own work. He told of working for six months on one short story, and that a month’s effort in revision and editing is typical.

For those searching for authors to inspire them, he recommended Ernest Hemingway for his simplicity of style. Wolff also recommended Richard Price who wrote: “Lush Life, Clockers,” and “Wanderers” He believes that the greatest American writer was F. Scott Fitzgerald. When asked to give a shout out to everyone, Wolff said that, “Even though you’re living in a hard grim situation, take hope, and find goodness. Don’t concentrate on the shadows.”

On Aug 17, 2008, Wolff returned. Courtesy of Patten College University coordinator Jennifer Scaife, invited the writer back here to read. Choosing “Pharoses’ Army,” he presented a chapter that talked of his experience in Vietnam as a Lieutenant, and how fate seemed to pass him by that otherwise might have meant him dying in battle. The crowded Arts in Corrections room gave him a loud applause for some inspiring writing. At the end, he mentioned that he’ll be donating to the San Quentin Library a selection of his work. We hope to see him back here again soon.

SUDOKU

Puzzle by: George Lowe

4		6					8	3
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				5	7			
3	9					7		8

VIETNAM VETERANS GROUP OF SAN QUENTIN

Fernando A. Lemus (Outside Coordinator)

Who are we?

In 1987, the Vietnam Veterans Group of San Quentin ("V.V.G.S.Q.") was formed to help Vietnam Veterans incarcerated at San Quentin begin pursuing a vision of recovery from trauma and other things in life that affect the way human beings react and behave. The V.V.G.S.Q. became an inmate activity group and its membership includes all veterans who have served honorably in the United States Armed Forces and received discharges under honorable conditions.

The group has since expanded its vision to holding fund drives to support worthy community causes that directly effect veterans and charitable causes within the community. These causes include a Scholarship Award, Operation M.O.M., and the Christmas Toy Drive.

In 1998, the V.V.G.S.Q. set up a seminar with the California Department of Veterans Affairs and the North Bay Vets center. From this seminar, the Veterans Issues Group (V.I.G.) was conceived and implemented at San Quentin.

Under the direction of professional staff, individualized, comprehensive and integrated services to veterans takes place every Wednesday evening in the Education module for the sole purpose of successful reintegration into society. Additionally, the V.I.G. program reaches incarcerated veterans with viable programs for reentering society, and to assist group members in contacting various resources to accomplish these objectives.

Furthermore, the V.V.G.S.Q. is involved with various projects and activities, such as the R.E.A.L. choices program, to reach and educate adolescent lives to be productive members of society. Team "C" of the Choices program is made up of members of the Vietnam Veterans Group of San Quentin.

Another activity the V.V.G.S.Q. supports is Operation M.O.M.. Operation M.O.M.

is a non-profit organization that supports our troops deployed throughout the world. The V.V.G.S.Q. supports Operation M.O.M. with cash, material donations, clerical assistance and packing care packages with food, hygiene, and clothing packages. Also, we assist Operation M.O.M. with custom declarations, labels and mail out donation requests.

The Toy program is very dear to our group, too. We have always supported the San Quentin Toy program with donations and helping the program. This year, 2008, will be the 20th year of the program. The warden has authorized the V.V.G.S.Q. to sponsor this worthy program.

Recently, the V.V.G.S.Q. decided to support "Tabs for Tots" as well ("Tabs," as in soda can tabs). Tabs for Tots are supported through the Vietnam Veterans of the Vietnam War ("V.Vn.W.") Post FLI-02 in Belle Glade, FL and the V.V.G.S.Q. is CAI-01, the first chapter in California that the V.Vn.W. chartered into their organization. The proceeds from our fundraising will assist Ronald McDonald charities with their efforts to help sick children diagnosed with cancer and their families.

Finally, the Stamps for Soldiers and Color Guard are operated by the V.V.G.S.Q.

Stamps for Soldiers are cancelled stamps which are collected from mainline, Condemned Row and R/C prisoners. After collecting the stamps, they are sent to disabled veterans. The disabled veterans peel off the stamps as a form of physical therapy and create "collages" and other works of art.

The V.V.G.S.Q. provides a color guard at the GED and college graduation, the September 11 remembrance and other functions as requested by custody staff and/or non-custody staff.



GETTING PERSPECTIVE

By: Collette Carroll

What can **IMPACT** do for you? **Incarcerated Men Putting Away Childish Things** can change your life! **IMPACT** is the largest self-help program at San Quentin, serving approx 100 men from the Mainline and 45 men in H-Unit every Monday night.

How will this program change your life? Through **IMPACT** you will learn about you, about who you really are. You will be provided with skills to identify things you need to do to be successful both inside prison and upon release. You will learn such things as What is a Man? (about Mr. BS) about Image vs Reality, you will learn about Addictions, Violence Prevention, Relationships, Financial Literacy and much more. This is a program for those that are serious about making a commitment to **AIR** (Accountability, Integrity and Responsibility) and to a road to a better life.

What is so different about our program? Firstly, **IMPACT** is facilitated (not taught) by fellow inmates, inmates who have gone through over 160 hours of **IMPACT** training in order to help us all learn the skills to succeed in life. **IMPACT** uses its own copyrighted manuals and PowerPoint presentations, each week moving through the Modules and Sessions of the program. Our evening starts

with the whole group working together on the current Session and then we break-out into small groups to discuss in depth the issues and exercises presented that night. This is an opportunity to share and learn in an intimate personal setting. **IMPACT** is a strictly confidential program – what's said in **IMPACT**, stays in **IMPACT**.

Men of San Quentin who have been through our program are now on the streets successfully contributing to their families and communities. These men are teaching **IMPACT** at the CDCR Dept of Juvenile Justice throughout the state (and being paid by the CDCR) these men are Drug & Alcohol Counselors, Plumbers, Sheet Metal workers, and Heavy Equipment Operators. These men, to a one, attribute their success on the streets to what they learned through **IMPACT**. To quote one individual, "if it hadn't been for the things I learned through **IMPACT** and other programs at San Quentin I would not have been able to handle the extreme family pressures I've been under since returning to society. I now understand the importance of having this as my strength to draw from when in a high pressure situation". –ex-San Quentin inmate paroled after serving 10 yrs.

Want to know if **IMPACT** is

right for you? Ask around, there is someone near you who has been through our program they will not hesitate to tell you how it has changed their lives, their relationships with fellow inmates and with their families and staff.

I can explain the benefits of **IMPACT** but I believe hearing it from someone who has been where you are can explain it better:

"Parole was something that I never thought would be possible. Yet, today, I'm convinced that as we accept the challenge to looking beyond our past and anticipate a redefined future, our goal of making a positive IMPACT on others will unfold before our eyes. Are you willing to accept that challenge? Then prepare to meet the new you!" Edward Ramirez, Lifer - Paroled 2005

"Our acknowledgement of the reality of injustice in our lives is not enough to gain our freedom. We must find the courage to transform our eager yet passive desire for change into concrete action that will most assuredly free us. Project IMPACT provided the concepts I needed in order to ACCEPT the challenge and fight for my life. It is with gratitude today that I work alongside you." Bryan A. Smith, Lifer - Paroled 2007

"In life there are opportunities that we must take advantage of that will ensure a better future; IMPACT is one such opportunity; Take It!" A. Leonard Neal, Served 24 yrs 11 mths 7 days - Paroled 2005

IMPACT is ready – are You???

PRISON PHONE RATES DROPPING

While Arnie (Governor Schwarzenegger) hasn't shown too many places where he's been on our side, he did sign off on a bill written by Senator Mike Machado that will cut prices over half by the end of January 2011. Since many people won't write, staying in touch with many family members is only possible by phone.

BROTHERS IN PEN:

"A Means of Escape"

By: Zoe Mullery

A second anthology of short stories, written by prisoners here at San Quentin State Prison is now out in print. Some stories are fiction, some memoir/creative non-fiction, and some a combination. The subject matter here is as wide as the imagination. This is a culmination of over a year's work of labor by prisoners, many of them Lifers, all serious writers.

Copies are available from: "brothersinpen.wordpress.com" All proceeds from the sale of this book go through the William James Association to support the Creative Writing class through the Arts-in-Corrections program. The first anthology, "Brothers in Pen," is also still available.

SQ NEWS MAIL FROM COALINGA PRISON!

Dennis Thomas, G18063

Your paper is a great miracle, a light in a dark world. I just got to prison, first arrest, first time in jail, first time in prison; looking at two "25-to-Life" sentences, consecutive. I'm appealing and Marcia Clark of "OJ Simpson" fame is my state appointed attorney. This is a totally new and scary world. My new cellie just came from "SQ" and had your "Vol. 2008, No. 1." I read the San Quentin News from cover to cover, and learned more in ½ hour than I have in 99 days in Wasco & Pleasant Valley Prisons. We don't have a paper, or even a pamphlet here at "PVSP," and I would like any and all information you can send me on starting one here!

Dennis:

The DOM states that a prison may publish an Institution Newspaper. We encourage any and all would be Editors to speak to the institution's education department. We hope this will provide you with meaning and purpose, while enjoying a good source of information.

SQ Digital TV

By: Kenneth Brydon

The switch over from analog to digital signal scheduled for February 2009 is little more than a minor inconvenience for San Quentin. In order to receive the benefits of the broadcasting change, the viewer's television must be "Digital Signal Ready." If your set was purchased recently, you already have a set ready to receive the new signal.

Quentin is installing converters on their antenna, which will allow older televisions to receive the new signal. But, we will not receive the enhanced picture benefits on our old sets.

The "benefits" are primarily a picture that's crisper. People behind the first major change in broadcasting since the advent of the color TV say that all the colors will be richer and deeper,

Ronnie Sanders (1EY55) asks: "What's the name of the company that provides our cable," and, "Why can't we purchase ESPN2, AMC, HBO..." The first answer, Ronnie, is that we provide our own cable service. What we receive are the "free" broadcasts anyone with an antenna get. Hope that coming improvements will give you a bit more selection in viewing options, stay healthy, Ronnie.

CENTERFORCE INSIDE/OUT SUMMIT 2008

By: Kenneth R. Brydon

On October 6 & 7, 2008, at the Double Tree Sonoma Wine Country, in Rohnert Park, California, "Centerforce Inside/Out" summit will once again happen. Last year's event was sold out and covered many aspects of the difficulties that face California and the rest of the country in developing a more comprehensive method of crime prevention and fair and just treatment of prisoners.

This year's summit will do much the same, providing education, insight, inspiration and a proactive focus network. For two days more than 400 people are expected to gather to confront the incarceration crisis and engage in an energetic forum on discovering solutions for the impact of incarceration on individuals, families, and communities.

Sessions at this year's summit will include: Sentencing Reform, Incarceration Medicine, and 15 workshops falling into four main topics: "Going In," "Being In," "Getting Out," and "Staying Out." Speakers are yet to be determined. For more information, one can log on to: www.centerforce.org. Or call: 415-456-9980.

Flag Football’s “Blues Brothers”

By: Big Will Packer

Someone asked me today why it is that we don’t have more than one football team here in SQ(?). He went further to say he thought it would be more competitive if there were. I could have responded simply by saying the same reason there’s only one baseball, and one basketball team; but I didn’t. I tried to explain to him that we, the Blues Brothers, have a mission, and gave him a brief description of what that objective is. The discussion suggests to me a misconception of our program by the general population. My name is William, “Big Will” Packer, and I’m the Head Coach of the Blues Brothers and I’d like to give you all a broader, better understanding of what we’re all about.

This is our fourth season coming up under the sponsorship of Kent Philpott and Stan Damas. Their commitment of time and energy has made it possible for us to do what we love, and excel at it. This will be our third season with me as Coach. Under my direction we enjoy a 15-0 record, and we of course look forward to another undefeated season. Critics of our program are quick to point out that we are bigger, stronger, quicker, faster and better than the teams that come in to play us. They talk as if we should be ashamed of these facts.

They’re wrong, and we’re not ashamed.

What our detractors seem to be unaware of are the hours of conditioning and practicing we put in each season to protect our house. The reason we outclass the teams that come in to play us is due to our dedication to the discipline of football, and our development of the exceptional talents we’ve been blessed with. Our players are committed to doing the work necessary to be good, and quite frankly, better than the teams that come in to play us. We take pride in the tradition we’ve established, and we are dedicated to the fulfillment of our goals

As much as building character is an important part of our mission, so is building bridges to the outside. We’ve been blessed with the unique opportunity to play football develop friendships and fellowship with some pretty amazing people. Our aim is to continue to maintain these relationships, and provide the best entertainment possible throughout the season for our fans. Our ultimate goal is to one day develop a talent who will someday make it to the professional league, that we can all take pride and pleasure in watching him play. God bless you all, and I look forward to seeing you on the sidelines in September.

SPORTS TRIVIA

All of Roger Clemmon’s Yankee jerseys have been removed from the racks in the baseball museum in New Jersey due to zero sales. Demand for his memorabilia has nearly disappeared. His rookie baseball card is selling for just 10 percent of its asking price.

Every NBA player is randomly drug tested four times during each basketball season.

Actor/Comedian Billy Crystal signed a one-day contract with the New York Yankees. He batted in a scheduled exhibition game against the Pittsburgh Pirates. The 60 year-old Crystal missed a hit down the right field line by mere inches.

Sports Illustrated predicted Tiger Woods will win the Grand Slam this year.

Two brothers who co-owned a small shoe manufacturing business in a tiny German town couldn’t get along, so they parted ways. They both became wildly successful. One started a brand called "Adidas" and the other a brand named "Puma."

17-year-old Rachel Flanders rowed across the Atlantic Ocean single handedly.

QB Carson Palmer's younger brother, Jordan, signed a two year contract with the Bengals to back up Carson. Jordan set records for passing yards and touchdowns at the University of Texas, El Paso.

San Quentin Warriors

Eyes are always open for new talent

By George Lamb
and
Shaun Payton

The San Quentin Warriors basketball team has a very colorful history. I’ve been here for eight years, played for the first four, and was sidelined by injuries in the middle of the fifth. After being out for two seasons, and in the middle of my comeback, I was recruited by the team to assume the role of “Head coach.” With only 7 wins and 11 losses, we were in trouble, and in danger of having our first losing season only to finish 18 and 14.

This year began with a real training camp, which included a rigorous strength and conditioning focus; we also had actual tryouts. However, we’ve evolved as a program and are much more oriented spiritually that in time past; I couldn’t cut people. Instead, it an attempt to honor our program as a “Sports Ministry,” we decided to establish a practice squad. We want men! It’s obvious that we all need growth and development, therefore giving up on people is not an option. It does hurt when I see men who could be great give up on themselves!

Players come and go over the course of the season, which began May 29th, 2008. We are presently 10 and 5, with 18 games left on our schedule. We have had only one cancellation due to the Hitland Yard Ministry (which we fully supported). Our coaching staff includes me (George Lamb), and there are a number of men who are on the inside in addition to a few folks from the outside who support our program; to them all we say is: “Thanks!” They will receive mention by name over the course of the season, as these “Warrior Reports” continue.

On behalf of the San Quentin Warriors, my name is Shuan Payton, and I joined the team in 2007. In the beginning it was just about basketball for me, but I came to realize that it wasn’t only about playing ball, but it was also about communication,

discipline, respect and trust. But most of all, it was about “God.” All of these things mean a lot to me. I’ve never been on a team that prayed before the game and shared testimonies and had devotionals at halftime.

Since I’ve been on the team, I’ve made plenty of mistakes and wrong decisions that could have been prevented. Those mistakes and poor decisions have taken me to the “hole” a couple of times, but, when I returned, I was still a part of the team. I’ve had time to reflect while on the side lines observing what I was missing as I served my suspensions. Men in prison go through things, but having teammates who will make the journey with you and sometimes carry you through to the other side, makes victory on all levels of life sweeter!

It’s a new season, and our team is younger and more talented than we were last year. We’re capable of winning every game. Our losses have been very close, and always a result of having key players missing; not excuses, just facts. We’ve lost a few players to parole and are expecting to lose a few more before the end of the season. So, eyes are always open for new talent. We have a core group who are expected to remain through the end of the season; we’re good and our goal is still the same...WIN!

All of the teams we play are from the outside. College teams, men’s leagues, and church league teams; so interacting with them is great – they show us love, respect and a considerable amount of support (including donation of equipment!). They grow and are blessed as we grow and are blessed. Thanks to my teammates, and our coaching staff, as well as all those in support; especially to our officials; especially “Huggie,” and to the administration for allowing the program to realize the successes we all enjoy. To the fans who love us, “Good-looking,” and to those who don’t, “Stop-hating!” Just kidding – pray for us!

“BOSTON” MARATHON MAN

By: Kenneth R. Brydon

On Sept. 01, 2008, Ron Goodman plans to run the distance and time that would qualify him for the Boston Marathon. A part of the 1,000-Mile Club at San Quentin, Goodman is running approximately 60 miles a week in preparation for the 26.2 miles he hopes to run in under 3 hours, 15 minutes.

About four years ago, while serving time at Folsom Prison, Goodman became serious about the discipline of running. He feels that it helps build character. “The Club is about learning discipline and healthy training,” says Goodman. His accomplishments also extend to painting and art, where he is a featured artist in displays of prison artwork in community shows.

The 1,000-Mile Club, sponsored by Laura Bowman, teaches all aspects of running from beginner to advanced. People who wish to learn how to start running, or to make the most of the sport, will receive good tips by the club’s coach, Frank Ruona. At 63 years old, Mr. Ruona would still have just about all the guys around this joint eating his dust.

The average distance of the 20 club members, is 10 to 15 miles per week. Getting on the track is a good way to relieve stress, get the blood pressure down, sleep better, and get an endorphin high that’ll make peeing in a bottle no big deal!

San Quentin Pirates The Forgotten

*Everyone has heard of the San Quentin Giants, well, almost.
One team that is not illuminated is the San Quentin Pirates
softball team.*

By Ron Martin

Quiet as it’s kept, a lot of fans and prisoners come out regularly on Sunday afternoon to umpire, cheer, and sometimes express the intention of playing.

The San Quentin Pirates played hardball in 2006 and 2007, coached by Kent Philpot. Stan-the-Man is the trusty bench coach, and two men in blue, Frankie Smith, and Will Packer, assisted in the management. Briefly, in 2007, they had a fast pitch league. So behind the scenes there are some very talented players having fun making great plays and hitting their fair share of home runs (the pinnacle of the game). Mr. Rich and Bob Mayer, the San Quentin Pirates sponsors and coaches from the free world, obtained the helm of the team in 2006, and make it possible for the men to play in a league all of their own. These sponsors take time out of their

busy lives, and for this we thank them deeply.

Big Dan, prisoner/assistant coach, protects the dish at home; Big Ron Dalton" is anchored to 1st, and has a snow shovel for a scoop. Anyone on the yard who follows sports has witnessed the notorious long ball hitting Southpaw in action Ke Lam, (a.k.a. “Mighty Mouse”) exhibits inhumanly long ball power to both sides of the diamond. "Lam patrols centerfield with excellent speed and an accurate arm – his territory is known as the “No-fly-zone.”

John Harper, our surefielding 3rd baseman secures the hot corner. Kevin Carr patrols left field with a strong arm and swings hard at the plate. Big Shawn, who just joined, plays right-center, and can place the ball with authority anywhere. Little Laos patrols a dangerous right

field, with mixed terrain, and sprays the ball all over.

Paul Jordan plays the hot spot at short, and leads the team in averages with his phenomenal bat. Fernando Lemus is our utility player covering 3rd, 1st, and pitching; he is an asset to the team. Thacker, Davis, and retired Giants player Dave Marshall play 2nd and share time. Marshall is a crafty player who swings left-handed at the plate.

Not to be counted out, Tony, our newest addition, switches off at the mound with Junkyard who has patiently waited on the side until his debut. They both sport a decent bat, and, finally, Big Mario, who was injured and is still on the D.L. has a huge bat with enough pop to all fields, and can play any position. The Pirate Players thank the Athletic Department at SQ.

Editor: Opinion

When the School of Hard Knocks Produces Fruit

By Michael R. Harris

Seeing the pride on the faces of the men of San Quentin could not compare with the pride held by family members that where in attendance for the 2008 Graduation celebration.

This pride was evident by the tears and joy displayed throughout the ceremony. Wives, Mothers, Fathers, Sisters, Brothers, Sons and Daughters /Friends in most cases had never seen their loved one complete or graduate from anything before.

A day to remember. This was not the first time that I had attended a graduation ceremony at San Quentin. Both experiences were quite special in a unique way, but this time I was there to develop a story surrounding the event. So I thought; *“life has a funny way of up-staging prepared plans.”*

So I got there early and started to observe organized chaos playing out; a host of volunteers assisting with the

preparation, men being fitted with graduation robes and family member filing into the chapel where the ceremony took place. And all kinds of supporters; program sponsors,



Graduation Ceremony 2008

volunteer teachers from local universities associated with Patten College and the Prison University Project.....

SQ staff, program instructors, quest speakers..... the energy was boiling; one would think this was preparation for a major concert. So I'm thinking, who do I interview first - *how am I going to fully capture the essence of this day?* Then; I spotted the SQ film production crew who were also producing a piece surrounding the event for a documentary they were

working on.

Me being a born net-worker, I asked “Can we work together?” Marvin Andrews replied “No problem.” And then Troy Williams followed up with “Let’s do this.” Then there was Lonny Morris, of SQTV, setting up to do film interviews as well. So all I have to do is take notes and be at the right place at the right time and SQ news will be ok. Then Willie Rahman Green walks into the garden chapel area with his family; his wife Mary and their son. Mary had also attended her husband’s graduation in 2002 in this same exact chapel. She was also filled with pride and joy this time for an altogether different reason. All attention focused on him as if he was a rock star – with everybody in line to embrace a man who had become a friend/mentor to so many, including me.

As he approached we embraced and he said “I don’t know if I’m going to make it big fellow.” His knees buckled. I said “You already have.” Overwhelmed by the reality that the last time he in stood in this same exact spot; dressed in blue, just over 90 days ago; and that he had resided in this same

prison for over a decade. *WOW! Oh what difference a day makes!*

Warden Ayers allowed history to be made in San Quentin on this day by giving Mr. Green an opportunity to return shortly after being released from his conviction, which was overturned after 25 years. A man who had always professed his innocence, one of the things that always stood out about Rahman was that he never lost hope, and he kept his dignity and integrity intact even though there were times when it seemed as if justice would never prevail.

Rahman spent the majority of his time working in the prison library teaching and sharing knowledge with others including some of the graduates he spoke in front of at the ceremony. After his speech Rahman went down to the peer education building and spoke in front of a group of men in a pre-release class held by Mr. Shimel and continued his words of wisdom. On his way back he decided to walk instead of riding in the cart with his family. One of his long time

friends Demetrius ‘Flip’ Daniel recalls when the alarm went off and all the prisoners got down as is customary. Rahman did so as well in his tailored white suit. Flip believed that it was not done because he was brain washed, but, as a gesture of solidarity and love/respect for his brothers in blue. Seeing the faces of the proud families was well worth the price of admission, alone.

But listening to Julio Medina chronicling his journey in becoming a productive citizen was encouraging to say the least. Just to witness a man who had once walked in the same shoes as many of us had. As Medina stood and presented his message of hope to the audience, he enabled us all to envision a snap



Willie Rahman Green

shot of what is possible when you apply yourself and utilize the time to re-educate oneself.

THANKS FOR CARING

By: W.W. Maclean (4N81)

My son, Will, was senselessly shot and killed on May 24, 2008. I would like to express my appreciation to everyone for their support through this difficult time. The cards, letters, and many acts of kindness came out of the blue. I simply want to thank each of you for reaching out the way you have. Rest in peace, Will, see you on the other side. I miss you and think of you every day.

Team Exodus

On Saturday, September 06, 2008, West Block Yard will be host to a Resource Fair for the Reception Center prisoners. Numerous booths will be set up providing information for many self-help programs. Hosted by Team Exodus, this is a first-time event in the 20 years of the R/C at San Quentin.

Send Submissions to:
Education Dept. / SQ News
Death Row Stories Welcome

San Quentin News

USPS 4870-700

The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Administration, nor the inmate population, and should be considered solely the opinion of the individual author unless specified.

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This publication is printed by the students in the San Quentin Vocational Printing Program. Thanks for all the help from everyone!

The Chance of Hope

By: Felix Lucero

Prison college programs are often viewed with harsh criticism. Supporters contend that they reduce recidivism and increase the quality of life for a group of people who may not have had the best opportunities in life. Critics argue that criminals should be paying their debt to society with separation and self-reflection.

For my first 10 years in prison I learned how to survive and not much else. I read books on philosophy and learned to write my feelings down on paper, but I could never find that intellectual stimulation that was lacking in my life. I didn't even know there was such a thing.

For the past five years I've been enrolled as a student in the Patten University program. The course work, I found, came easy for me; the social interaction was where I felt stunted. Years of isolation had left me socially inadequate. Like a person learning to walk after a serious injury, I had to re-learn



Felix Lucero

the art of conversation. I had to be reminded that I was human.

My interactions with teachers and students have taught me the difference between charitable narcissism and true service to your fellow human. I believe that higher education is a fundamental human right. If there is a thing called human nature, it has to be the desire to live both physically and spiritually free. Prison is a place filled with hope, laughter, depression and misery. The college program doesn't remove the depravities of prison. But it does offer another way to think about the world, and equips you with the tools to articulate your situation.

An argument can be made that prisons are obsolete. At the same time their presence is as much a part of the landscape as the Pacific coast. Prisons can be institutions that inspire change; they can also be a place where oppression reaches its apex of excellence. Education has the power to transform, not only the human, but the world which we inhabit.

MAC Executive Body Members	CDC#	Housing :
Johnson, S.	H-20162	2-N-81L
Sefeldeen, K.	D-65574	1-N-96L
Mancinelli, T.	D-37386	5-N-87U
Tindall, M.K.	C-36349	4-N-37L
Pena, E.	H-77082	3-N-24L

Men's Advisory Councils:	CDC#	Housing	Representing:
Seiler, P.J.	E-16869	2-N-90L	Whites
Pratt, D.	C-2301	4-N-01L	Whites
White, G.	T-75007	5-N-39L	Af-Am.
Vernon, D.	P-41141	4-N-16L	Af-Am.
Ybarra, J.	C-18150	2-N-13L	Mex-Am.
Valdivia, N.	C-29917	3-N-21L	Mex-Am.
Molina, I.	J-71378	4-N-85U	Mex. N.
Pham, V.	J-53985	4-N-35L	Asian/O.
Sinocruz, P.	J-81323	3-N-19L	Pac. I.
Frank, H.	J-80928	3-N-13L	AMI

Ruling Limits Governor's Discretion to Deny Parole

By David Marsh

The power of the California governor to arbitrarily deny parole to model prisoners has been curbed by the state Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Ronald George, in writing for the 4-3 majority, said the governor must show “some evidence” that a parolee is presently a danger to public safety before overturning a Board of Parole decision to grant parole.

The ruling came in the case of Sandra Davis Lawrence, 61, who has served more than 23 years for the 1971 killing of her lover’s wife. The Board of Parole found Lawrence to be a model, well-behaved prisoner who had expressed remorse for the killing. In 2005 she was granted parole for the fourth time in 12 years.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger reversed the panel’s decision as he had done on previous occa-

sions. He found the circumstances of the killing, in which Lawrence shot and stabbed Rubye Williams to death, to be of a particularly egregious nature.

The governor’s office released a statement condemning the court’s ruling as an infringement upon the governor’s ability to make rulings designed to protect the public safety.

In a separate but related case, the court used the legal standards previously set forth in its ruling on the Lawrence case to unanimously uphold the governor’s power to deny parole when there is a legitimate finding of danger to the public safety. The court upheld Schwarzenegger’s’ denial of parole to Richard Shaputis, convicted of second-degree murder in the 1987 shooting of his wife. Shaputis has refused to accept responsibility for killing Erma Jeanne Shaputis, 47.

Special Thanks

The students of the Critical Thinking class taught this past semester by the following volunteer/instructors for Patten University: **Fidan Elcioglu, Daniel Immerwahr, and Mike Levien**, wish to thank them for making it possible for us to expand our minds. Not just to think outside the box, but to dare to question the very nature of the box, or boxes, in which we live. We thank you! And to all of the instructors who volunteer their valuable time in order to make the program become a reality for us, our thanks to all of you! Without each of you, none of this would be possible.

Printed by
san Quentin Print Shop

San Quentin News

THE PULSE OF SAN QUENTIN

VOL. 2008 NO. 3

OCTOBER 10, 2008

SAN QUENTIN, CALIFORNIA 94964

POPULATION: 5,274



Top row: Jaimee Karroll, Bilenda Harris-Ritter, Will Packer, Vu Pham, George Lamb. Second row: Leonard Rubio, Mitch Zak, Keith Wattley, Fr. Stephen Barber, Third row: Hector Oropeza, Keith Wattley, Michael R. Harris, Lynn B. Cooper, Troy Williams & Jonathon Simon

Proposition 9 Called ‘Catastrophic’

By ALY TAMBOURA

A symposium to address the possible far-reaching impact of Proposition 9 on the State of California was held in the Catholic Chapel Friday. Attended by inmates, special interest groups and sponsors of the proposition, the symposium made for emotionally charged dialogue.

Proposition 9, also known as Marcy’s Law, is a proposed amendment to the California Constitution, which if passed in November’s election will give victims of violent crime more rights relating to prosecuting offenders, receiving restitution and attending the parole hearings of convicted criminals.

Proponents of the proposed

amendment believe it is needed to repair flaws in “The Victims’ Bill of Rights” passed by voters in 1982. Opponents argue that the proposition unfairly increases prison sentences by increasing parole board hearing denials from the standard 1 to 5 years, to a statute maximum of 15 years, which they say will essentially increase already long prison terms to excessive and unjust lengths.

Proposition 9 Campaign Director Mitch Zak explained, to an engaged audience, why he believed that the proposition should be passed. “Politicians use public safety as a political football,” said Zak, stating his support for the proposition.

Prison inmates and visitors to the prison showered Zak with

the problems they anticipate the proposition will cause to inmates, prisons, and the state’s finances.

Troy Williams addressed the audience from a particular position of being both a Lifer and the brother of a victim of violent crime. His heart-wrenching explanation of the effects the proposition will have on him and other Lifers moved at least two people in the audience to tears.

Opponents of the proposition say that the proposal will cost hundreds of millions and take away hope from Lifers who have served out decades of time, and are currently eligible for parole. “What happens when you give a man a 15 year

See *Symposium*, page 4

Team Exodus Breaks New Ground in West Block

400 Reception Center inmates living in West Block and the Gym attended a reentry fair Saturday, September 06, on the West Block Yard that provided information for successful parole back into the community.

Initiated by inmate Westley Barry (aka, “Preacher”), and facilitated by West Block Lieutenant D. Footman, information booths were arranged on the walls of the West Block Yard that offered information on: drug and alcohol counseling, medical (HIV and

Hepatitis C prevention and care), job training, education, mental health counseling, family counseling and housing assistance. Various members of the Protestant Chapel assisted in distributing Bibles and other valuable spiritual study materials.

Preacher, a four-time champion of the television show “American Gladiators,” seeks to inspire individuals and bring his sports discipline to others. With 11 years incarcerated, Preacher created the self-help

program titled “Team Exodus.” Along with others, he has been facilitating the curriculum: “Grown Men Business.” This program addresses the recidivism of repeat offenders in prison. Through this two month study program, they are called upon to “Own up to their responsibilities to themselves, their families and their community.”

Footman observed 30 to 50 inmates attending these classes, and appreciates the true value in packaging elements of rehabilitation

within the San Quentin Reception Center. With the exception of basic education, only the bare essentials of opportunity have been available to these individuals.

Beginning in the Gym, Preacher later expanded the program to include those in the West Block Unit. The 300 men from West Block who completed the Grown Men Business training, were the first allowed to attend the Team Exodus Resource Workshop.

See *Exodus*, page 2



Lt. Footman

Transferring California Inmates to Other States

The number of California inmates serving their sentences in California Out-of-State Correctional Facilities, or COCFs, surpassed 5,000 for the first time in September. A growing number of San Quentin inmates have been processed, endorsed and readied for involuntary transfer to one of the four states currently participating in the program.

The transfers, which reached a total of 5,101 as of Sept. 25, 2008, were initiated as a result of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s October 2006 Emergency Order on Prison Overcrowding. They were authorized and funded through Assembly Bill 900, a massive \$7.9 billion prison reform bill signed by Schwarzenegger in May 2007 which set a goal of housing 8,000 inmates out of state by next summer.

The transfers have allowed the CDCR to remove a total of 5,386 nontraditional beds statewide, according to a statement posted on the CDCR website. Nontraditional beds are beds

placed in areas not designed to accommodate beds. The statement said that as a result of the transfers, 17 prison gymnasiums and dayrooms have been cleared of inmate beds since August 2007, a reduction of 27 percent, and have reduced the total of nontraditional beds still in use throughout the system to 14,232.

A growing number of SQ inmates have completed the multi-level screening process, been endorsed for out-of-state transfer, and are awaiting the long bus ride to the hub facility in Wasco where they will await a flight out to a COCF in Mississippi, Tennessee, Oklahoma or Arizona.

The COCF’s three in Arizona and one in each of the remaining states, are all privately owned and operated by the Corrections Corporation of America under contract to the state of California. Indiana was previously involved in the deal, but is not currently accepting inmates for placement.

See *Inmate Transfers*, page 8

‘NORA’ ON THE BALLOT

California voters will be voting November 4th on one of the most major changes in California criminal law in a very long time, known as “The Nonviolent Offender Rehabilitation Act” (“NORA”). It is a multi-faceted shakeup of California’s justice system. Tens of thousands of those who would previously be incarcerated, including youths under 18, would now be placed in treatment instead of lockup.

The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst’s Office projects that NORA will reap \$1 billion a year or more in savings to the

California prison system. These savings are even more profound when measured against expected increases in the prison population and the annual CDCR budget.

Here are the key components of NORA:

- Prisons would be required to provide rehabilitation programs to all exiting inmates not less than 90 days before release.

- CDCR would be required to pay for rehabilitation programs for all parolees and for former parolees, who could request services for up to one year after discharge of parole.

- Prisoners whose crimes are nonviolent (with no prior strikes or no prior sex offenses requiring registration) would be able to earn time off their sentences with good behavior and by participating in rehabilitation programs.

This initiative, Proposition 5, would remove the power of the governor to appoint Parole Board members. Parole periods for qualified nonviolent offenders would be limited to between 6-12 months, compared with up to three years under current law, with earlier discharge upon completion of a rehabilitation program.

—Kenneth Brydon

THE FAMILY THAT OVERCOMES TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER



Elizabeth, Vince, Vince Jr. and Kea

In Jan. 2005, Vince Russo began taking correspondence courses through Ohio State University, pursuing his bachelor's degree. He borrowed a book on Hinduism in order to complete his first reading assignment, and then plowed into reading the material before the official assignment had arrived. There are many difficulties in attending college in a prison: lock-downs, going to work, getting mailed-in assignments from the professor, and then sending them back, having all tests proctored by those qualified to sit in that position, and then having the space to take the written tests.

Initially, the costs of the courses were paid for by a wealthy benefactor who was paying the expenses for a number of associate of arts graduates who were pursuing an advanced degree, but in time that money was exhausted, and he was using his own paychecks from his Prison Industry job to cover it.

Along with his job and school, Russo also remained dedicated to many self-help programs, as well as continuing to practice his Buddhist faith. He was on the ground floor with the Day of Peace program,

which last year was a large success, and days and nights during the week that he wasn't active in some sort of program and/or work were the exception.

In addition to these, Russo also had (has) a loving family whom he has remained devoted to. Every weekend his wife and his young son, Vincent Junior (a.k.a. "VJ"), were in the visiting room with him. VJ, now 14, was his father's delight, and, in spite of the limitations visiting imposes, parenting was done with love and nurturing that brought up this young man, and, before VJ, two daughters (Elizabeth and Kea) that any father would be very proud of.

Approximately three years ago tragedy struck Russo's life, his daughter, Kea, was in a serious car accident. A high speed head-on collision placed her in the hospital with numerous broken bones. Russo continued his life and schooling in here, while doing everything in his power to comfort his wife, daughters and son. Slowly her injuries and she resumed a normal life.

Life moves forward, and Russo continued to hold on to balancing his "model-prisoner" program in here with being a positive role-model for his son and family in the visiting room.

On April 05, 2007, Vince Russo's wife passed away, the woman whom he had married before coming to prison, and had stuck with him for 25 years of incarceration.

His daughters brought him the sad news, once more in the visiting room; where they shared their grief. A 13-year-old son had lost his mother and a husband had lost a devoted wife. Persevering, the family now pulled closer and Russo was more determined to complete what he'd begun. VJ had his choice of which sister to live with, and both daughters continued to take turns bringing in their brother on a weekly basis to see his father.

In June of 2008, Russo received his bachelor's degree, and his son and daughters were there with him in the Garden Chapel as he got up on the stage to speak and receive his diploma. The story of overcoming does not end with the accomplishments from inside, but also with VJ, who, inspired by his father, also maintained his grades and received 3.5 Grade average for quarter, and a 3.6 average for the entire school year. At the end of the VJ's school year, he was also awarded the *Character Award* handed out to those who overcome great challenges; this honor is not given every year, and he is now inscribed on a plaque that sits in the Principals Office.

Russo is now strategizing on his next step – getting his masters degree. One daughter is married, and the other is engaged. VJ is his Dad's greatest fan, and it's looking like this young man will one day go to college; where he'll have plenty of inspiration in seeing things through to the end.

—Kenneth Brydon



Ed Ballenger with the Magnetic Wave Machine

Machine Shop Receives State Fair Award

Award Winning Magnetic Training

San Quentin's Vocational Machine Shop has once again shown that precision is award winning. Four students, Ed Ballenger, Steven Hayes, William Branson, and Anthony Adams, entered a project for the 2008 California State Fair. They manufactured and assembled a Magnetic Wave Machine that was designed by engineers at The Exploratorium, a hands-on science museum in San Francisco. The project was awarded first place and outstanding group project in the Industrial & Technology Education Competition General Technology Group Project, Division 0755, Adult Class. The project was judged as excellent in general appearance, function/practicality, general finish, and workmanship. The judges comments were as follows: "Belongs in a museum or Exploratorium," "State Fair quality work," "Great job, highest quality, quality documentation," and "Best work I have seen in years."

This was the first complete Magnetic Wave Machine that the Machine Shop has manufactured. A couple of years ago, two other students manufactured parts for the original Magnetic Wave Machine that was later assembled by The Exploratorium and put on display at the museum. The original project was able to happen through a partnership with the non-profit museum that supplied all of the necessary tooling and materials while the students provided the labor. The partnership with The Exploratorium and other non-profit organizations allow students the opportunity to work on industry projects while also giving back to the community.

Mr. Saenz, the shop instructor, was so impressed with the display at the museum that he wanted an example built for the shop. He also wanted to enter the project in the State Fair hoping to duplicate the first place awards received by three of his students in the 2004 State

Fair for a commemorative medallion.

The students machined the key parts from 6061 Aluminum utilizing a Haas Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) Vertical Machining Center. The students are learning how to operate and set-up the machining center. They are also learning to program the machining center using *ESPRIT 2008 CAD/CAM* (Computer Aided Design/Computer Aided Manufacturing) software donated by D.P. Technology. The machining center was donated by the Haas Foundation in 2002 along with a CNC Turning Center. The donations of this equipment and software allow the students to obtain up-to-date training to prepare them for working in the machine tool industry.

The students truly thank the generosity of Mr. Saenz, Ms. Sheldon, and the other San Quentin teachers that pitched in to donate the bearings and silicone-rubber tubing that were needed for the project. Without their support the project would have never been completed.

Mr. Hayes was very fortunate to recently parole. His parole officer granted authorization for him to travel to Sacramento where he accepted the first place and outstanding group project awards at the State Fair on August 14, 2008. Mr. Hayes is currently furthering his education and working to support his family utilizing the skills he learned in the San Quentin Vocational Machine Shop. The craftsmanship and dedication to learning the skills of a machinist allowed all four of these men to earn another win for San Quentin's Vocational Machine Shop. The prize that is even more important than the ribbons is the skills these men are learning that will allow them to be productive, contributing, and successful citizens upon their re-entry into society as Mr. Hayes is currently showing us all.

—Leonard Rubio

Exodus

Continued from page 1

Once those in West Block were complete, the 100 men from the Gym who had also completed the program were allowed to benefit from the information and resource fair.

"In my working the Center, I've seen many men why continued re-prison" "many of there's noth-for them. doesn't she added. Footman "Let me fix Instead of you going to them, I'm bringing them to you."



Preacher Teaching R/C Offenders

thirteen years Reception asked many they've con- turning to Footman said, them said that ing out there And that sound right," "Alright," continued, that for you.

A total of 14 agencies from outside, and another eight programs that are already a part of the mainline re-entry program here at San Quentin, along with a total of 55 outside guests, brought information concerning counties throughout Northern California. Fresno, Humboldt, Oakland, San Francisco, Sacramento and Solano counties were all represented.

At the end of the event, informational material had run out at every booth, and a 1,000 questions had been answered by the outside guests. Future plans are in the works for a summit that is tentatively scheduled for February, and a second bi-annual Team Exodus resource fair for March 2009.

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During this transition, there will be several in normal delays in operation. From October 24th, 2008, up to first draw of November 12, 2008, postings of money to accounts (Hobby, Pay, Mail and Electronic deposits) will be handled as timely as possible.

Mr. Ward also notes that first draw may not happen on the exact day scheduled. This same operation is now in effect in several of CDCR Women's Prisons, and will be state-wide soon.

Religion

NORTH BAY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY ACCREDITATION

San Quentin Garden Chapel Christian Fellowship has recently been fully accredited under Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. This occurred and became effective in the spring of 2007. This is a “Contextualized Leadership Development Curriculum” for the student with the desire to pursue a bachelor degree in theological studies. The degree can lead to a career in the ministry or in a faith based counseling field.

About 15 San Quentin prisoners have taken, or currently are taking, several courses. One

benefit of enrolling in the theological study classes is you can continue the studies on-line over the internet when you leave San Quentin, if you’re not finished with all your classes. These are the type of classes that you need to apply for, by contacting Pastor Dr. Morris A. Curry in the chapel.

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary was established in 1944 and has incorporated San Quentin’s North Bay School of Theology under their long-term successful program of turning out some exceptional missionaries, pastors, and peo-

ple in various forms of ministries.

The main thing that I’ve especially enjoyed and found very satisfying was the high quality of the staff that has come inside prison walls to teach the classes. Dr. Duane Christensen has taught the Old Testament survey class from a Hebrew perspective. His knowledge and background are outstanding. He wrote the study materials we use. We are lucky to have such a high caliber education in a prison environment.

—Ed Kie

JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES

Open services are offered at the Garden Chapel Saturday mornings 10:30 – 12:00. Bible study is Wednesday evening 6:30 – 7:45 PM in the back room at the Protestant chapel.

EAST BLOCK PROTESTANT

Those who wish to restart East Block Protestant Services are advised to contact Pastor Dr. Morris Curry via U-Savem Envelope. Please provide your name, CDCR number, housing, and what exercise yard you’re on. Send information to: Protestant Chapel, Attention: Pastor Curry.

BUDDHIST PROGRAM

In 1998, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (“BPF”) was contacted with a request for assistance in forming a Buddhist religious program at SQ. The BPF director, Hozan Alan Senauke, assisted and contacted his Dharma Brother, Seido Lee de Barros, who agreed. After a tremendous effort... on Sept. 05, 1999, SQ’s Buddhadharma Sangha held its first Buddhist Religious Service. During a partial lockdown, 20 men made their way to the Garden Chapel and met an extraordinary Dharma teacher and Zen priest. Seido has continued weekly services and this Sangha has flourished.

Every Sunday evening men of various faiths come together for “zazen” (seated meditation), “kenhin” (walking meditation), and to listen to and discuss the Dharma in a way that offers freedom in the midst of chaotic prison life. These men are gaining useful tools for re-entry into society. The name Buddhadharma Sangha means the following: “Buddha” is the awakened one, or one striving for peace; “Dharma” is the teachings of the Buddha; “Sangha” is the community of practitioners who practice peace or more peaceful ways to live.

Amid the vernal splendor of Lumbini Garden, Gautama, the Buddha, was born in 566 B.C.E. He was the son of a wealthy and powerful king, Suddhodana, the ruler of the Sakya Clan in Kapilavastu, in what is now modern Nepal. The Buddha was given the name “Siddhartha,” which means “He who has attained his aim.” He passed away at the age of 80, leaving the following message to his sorrowing disciples: “The Dharma which I have given you shall be your teacher when I am gone.” So great has been the influence of this Dharma that today it is estimated that one-third of humanity pays homage to the Buddha’s noble teachings. The supreme goal set before all Buddhists is the escape from suffering, ignorance, illusion, and the attainment of truth and enlightenment. Only in the pursuit of this lofty ideal will human-kind find the true meaning of happiness and joy. He who loves the Dharma lives happily with his mind at ease.

The Buddhadharma Sangha meets every Sunday evening in the Garden Chapel. Services are from 5:30 to 8:30. The group hosts other activities: all-day meditations called “sesshins,” various ceremonies and teachings for those who wish to delve deeper into the Soto Zen lineage. All are welcome.

—Ron Singler

Sports and Entertainment

TENNIS LEGEND WALKS ON COURT



Inside Tennis Team with Brad Gilbert (Back row fourth from the left)

Last month Brad Gilbert came to San Quentin to visit with the Inside Tennis Team, giving pointers on how team members could improve their game.

For those who don’t recognize the name, Brad Gilbert is a former U.S. tennis champion and author of the book

“Winning Ugly.”

Gilbert hung out on the lower yard with the men for the afternoon, teaching and having some good down to earth fun. Dominating court with the grace and wisdom of a true champion, the men of San Quentin were both inspired and honored by Gil-

berts visit.

“When you are the master of your mind, you will master the art of winning,” writes Gilbert in his book.

The former champion, who successfully battled to become the forth ranked tennis player in the world, treated the Inside Tennis Team to a very special day, giving instruction on both tennis lessons and what it takes to be a winner off the court.

Gilbert, with his kind words of wisdom, fit safely into place with the seasoned tennis players of San Quentin. His visit left a lasting impression on all who were in attendance.

The Inside Tennis Team and coach Don Denevi say, “Thank you, Brad Gilbert.”

—R. E. Calix

THE WARRIORS WINNING WAYS

The San Quentin Warriors basketball team began their season on March 29, 2008, and now sport a winning record of 17 wins and 8 losses, said Head Coach, George Lamb. With another 7 games to go, it looks to be a heading for another winning season.

The mission of the San Quentin Warriors is to use sports as an outreach ministry. It’s designed to help men discover challenges in their own personalities and character, and developing those areas through a spirit of good will and competition.

The Warriors basketball



Saturday Morning Competition

love for the game. It doesn’t matter your race, religion or time being served. With the season drawing to a close,

new players are welcome ONLY for those with exceptional talent – “Other’s need not apply” (this season).

The entire team extends great appreciation to outside volunteer and Team General Manager, Steve Irwin. Recognition is also due for the winning season to the assistant coaches: Danny Cox and Fred Reynolds. George Lamb states in closing, “It is our goal to go undefeated for the remainder of the season.” All games will be on Saturday mornings at 9 – get out there and support the team.

FOOTBALL FANATICS IN THE HOUSE!

The San Quentin Blues Brothers football team is sporting a winning record with three wins and one loss into their season. A good mixture of North Block and H-Unit of all races, and has a good practice program. With a large group of fans following them, Kudos to Coach Will Packer.



Will Packer

You can never achieve victory if you accept defeat.

—Vince Lombardi

LAST MONTH’S SUDOKU SOLUTION

5	7	4	3	9	2	6	8	1
3	9	6	8	5	1	2	7	4
8	1	2	6	7	4	5	3	9
7	5	9	4	6	8	3	1	2
6	4	1	5	2	3	8	9	7
2	3	8	7	1	9	4	6	5
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4	8	5	1	3	7	9	2	6
1	2	3	9	4	6	7	5	8

SUDOKU

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Fill in all empty squares so that each row, column and 3 X 3 square contains the number 1 through 9 inclusive.

PROPOSITION 9 – Marsy’s Law

By DAVID MARSH

In the Initiative-happy world that is California politics, where well heeled citizens with a personal ax to grind can and do, in effect, purchase permanent amendments to our state’s Constitution, millionaire and Broadcom cofounder Henry Nicholas III is back for another shot.

Nicholas, himself facing an array of drug and stock back-dating charges that could conceivably net him a total of 360 years behind bars if convicted on all counts, is widely credited with ensuring the passage of the three strikes initiative when he donated almost \$5 million of his personal fortune toward the effort when it appeared to be facing defeat. Many analysts now credit The Three Strikes Law with the longer prison terms that have resulted in hopelessly over-crowded prisons and jails.

Nicholas is again back in the political arena as the deep pockets and inspiration behind what proponents of Proposition 9, or ‘Marsy’s Law’, call a far reach-

ing victims’ Bill-of-Rights. Proposition 9 would, among other things, mean a wait of up to 15 years for a parole hearing for those inmates sentenced to a term-plus-life with the possibility of parole, and prevent state and county jails from using early release programs as a means of dealing with the state’s chronically overcrowded jails. The proposed law would also open parole hearings, and guarantee a chance to be heard at them, to almost anyone with only a slight interest in the case.

Proponents say that Marsy’s Law would constitutionally guarantee to victims of crimes the assurance of restitution, as well as broadening the role that victims could play in various legal proceedings against the offender. It also seeks to extend protections on the release of victims’ confidential information, and make it more difficult for the accused to gain release on bail.

Opponents of the proposed amendment are quick to point

out that many of the supposed victims’ protection guarantees were long-ago clearly set forth in the 1982 voter approved “Victims’ Bill of Rights”, Proposition 8. They maintain that Proposition 9 is unnecessary and an expensive duplication of effort that would seriously deplete the states already vastly over-burdened treasury at a time when it can least afford it.

By prohibiting early release of inmates from overcrowded jails and prisons, the measure, says opponents, would force financially strapped cities, counties and the state to make drastic cuts in many priority programs such as education, health care and services to the poor and elderly.

They maintain that the draconian changes proposed for the state’s already clearly dysfunctional parole system would effectively remove the “possibility-of-parole” clause included by state statute and the courts in most Lifers’ sentences.

COMMON SENSE ON PAROLE

By MICHAEL R. HARRIS

One of the biggest problems with Proposition 9 is that it wastes a lot of taxpayers’ money. The criminal justice system is already overwhelmed with wasted money and wasted lives, and this proposition does nothing to help. It actually makes it worse.

The arguments favoring Proposition 9 are flooded with half-truths and political rhetoric.

The average cost for locking up someone in a California

One Man’s Opinion

ally, plus help relieve overcrowding.

I’m talking about releasing people that have served 20-plus years in prison and have met all the necessary requirements for release. Think about it, ladies and gentleman, you would have doled out adequate punishment to criminals and become more fiscally responsible in the process.

prison is \$43,000 a year. One report concludes that it costs \$1,000 per month in healthcare for any Californian over age 45.

It can be argued that it costs even more for prison inmates because of safety and security concerns. This means that the average Lifer costs the state \$55,000 or more per year. A prisoner advocate says some 5,000 Lifers are eligible every year for parole of the estimated 26,000 Lifers currently incarcerated. Only 80 are released, and 95 percent of those are released by court order, not parole.

Consider this: If just half of the eligible Lifers were paroled each year, it would save the state some \$250 million annu-

Anyone who really cares about justice and fiscal responsibility should grab an oar and start paddling, because we are

all in this boat and we will ultimately sink together. The oar is a “No” vote on Proposition 9.

Think of state government as a business: How could this company not go bankrupt? Who is the CEO managing this train wreck?

Everyone understands that criminals should be punished for their crimes. We all need to also understand that when they have been punished according to the law, they should get another chance at life and liberty.

Symposium

Continued from page 1

“What happens when you give a man a 15-year parole denial who has served 30 years on a 15-year-to-life sentence, what happens when you take away a man’s hope?” one inmate asked

have enforceable constitutional rights. The opposing sides differed when it came to taking away many of the rights prisoners have in relationship to rehabilitation and the pursuit of reentry into the community.

Keith Wattley, prisoners’ rights attorney and staunch opponent of Proposition 9, stated

his views to the crowd. “This proposition is trying to keep people in prison longer under the coat of victims rights... there is consistent evidence that locking people up for longer periods of time does

not work,” said Wattley.

According to guest speaker Jonathan Simon, professor of law and associate dean of the Jurisprudence and Social Policy Program at Berkeley, in the past 5 years over 1000 laws have been enacted enhancing prison sentences.

“California is in the crosshair of a major human disaster, this over-emphasis on violent crime is responsible for 8 percent of California’s general fund, California cannot afford to do this all over again,” said Simon.

The symposium was orchestrated by Patten University at San Quentin/ Prison University Project, sponsored by Jody Lewen and Jennifer Scaife. Leonard Rubio and Victim-Offender Education Group Facilitator and Catholic Chaplain Fr. Stephen Barber, co-hosted the event.

A copy of Proposition 9 is available for review by inmates in the prison law library.

If everyone howled at every injustice, every act of barbarism, every act of unkindness, then we would be taking the first step toward a real humanity.

—Nelson DeMille

DEATHROW CONCERNS

I have some concerns on the news paper. You mention that death row stories are welcome, and yet there have been no letters, or mentions of anything about death row.

Not only that, there is continued news about the graduates and educational accomplishments on the mainline, what about us who have graduated on death row; there’s no mention and that is wrong because they look at us as monsters and I believe it continues to look like that without your help and acknowledgements.

The recent paper published

some really not so funny jokes, and you could of used that space to talk about education achievements here on death row.

I submitted a paper mentioning about getting my GED in May, long before this paper came out, and there was no mention of it. I worked just as hard, if not harder than guys on the mainline – give us the same respect you give your fellow mainliners, we deserve it also.

—J. Capistrano

See: “Editors Need Help,”
Page 6.

Mailroom Update

By DAVID MARSH

A flurry of overtime in the mailroom, as well as a temporary shifting of staff and responsibilities, has resulted in mail reaching its inmate recipients in a much more timely fashion lately. Sgt. Amrhein, the mailroom supervisor, said the recent hiring she has done to fill two vacant staff positions on her staff will help to ensure the mail will continue to flow on time.

While the number of inmates within the walls has continued to rise over the years, the number of budgeted positions in the mailroom has fallen slightly. Currently, says Amrhein, a staff of six sorts and processes a weekly average of over 8,000 pieces of mail.

Article 41 in the Department Operations Manual, revised July 26, 2008, states that all first class mail will be processed and delivered within seven calendar days of receipt from the post office. Mail is generally received at the institution within two to three days of when it has been postmarked.

“We have redirect staff coming in from different units to help, and we will continue to work whatever overtime is necessary to keep the mail on time,” says Amrhein.



Jody Lewen, Director of the Prison University Project
Left: Michael R. Harris Right: Jonathan Simon

of the panel.

The question asked by most of the opponents of the proposition was, can a state with an already cash strapped budget afford a law that will add more debt? “California will have to spend hundreds of millions to save tens of millions,” said inmate panelist George Lamb, speaking on the possible fiscal impact Proposition 9 will have on the state.

Bilenda Harris-Ritter, crime victim, attorney, and trustee for the National Organization of the Parents of Murdered Children (POMC), spoke on the burdens that current laws have on the family members of the victims of crime, who have the right to attend yearly parole hearings of the offenders who murdered their loved ones. Harris-Ritter, whose parents were murdered, expressed her views in support of Proposition 9 to a very sympathetic audience.

Speakers from both sides of Proposition 9 agreed that victims and their families should

NO MORE CANTEEN DUCATS!

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Ward also notes that first draw may not happen on the exact day scheduled. This same operation is now in effect in several of CDCR Womens’ Prisons, and will be state-wide soon.



ON COMING TO SAN QUENTIN

By TOBIAS WOLFF

I’ve never done time, but in all honesty that’s more a matter of luck than virtue; I was in and out of trouble during my teenage years, some of it serious, and it wouldn’t have taken much for me to find myself heading down the wrong branch of one of those forking paths we continually find ourselves facing in this life.

So it’s not hard for me to imagine myself here in San Quentin. Perhaps partly for that reason, the approach always puts an icy hand on my back – the sight of the looming, fortress-like walls, and the grim series of sally ports and security gates, the echoing clang of the gates closing behind me. Of course I’m always aware that I can leave, but nevertheless there’s a certain unease in the experience.

So why have I returned, and why will I continue to return? Quite simply, because of the men I meet here. Maybe the guys, who turn up to talk with me, and share their thoughts and their writing, aren’t typical of the general population. I have no way of knowing. And I don’t care. The men I’ve spent time with here are engaged,

inquisitive, and straightforward as few people I meet these days are. Maybe it has something to do with the nature of life in San Quentin. You can’t hide from others, your privacy is always at risk, and in the end you can’t really pretend to be anything but what you are – well, I suppose you can pretend, but others will know you for who you are soon enough, and once you realize that, you know there’s no use pretending. I spent four years in the army, and though I



Tobias Wolff

wouldn’t compare the experiences in any other way, they have this in common – living cheek by jowl with other men, day after day, year after year, strips you down to essentials. If you’re honest, and lucky, you’ll be accepted for who you are; but you definitely won’t be accepted for who you aren’t.

The men I’ve met here seem to have learned this hard lesson. I’ve come to admire their honesty, their determination to use their brains and their gifts, and their attempts to make themselves free within these walls – to achieve freedom as a state of mind and spirit. I’ve learned from them. I hope I will continue to learn from them.

It Starts at Home

By MICHAEL A. ARON SR.

Fathers are the missing links in the lives of many young Americans. In an increasingly dangerous and unpredictable world, absent fathers add tremendously to the insecurity of children. It is common that children function best in an atmosphere where both parents combine and complement their energies and talents in the rearing of children.

Even if pregnancy is an accident, once a decision is made to bring a child to term, the rearing of that child cannot be an accident. Most children are born at the top of their game, genius level. It is the socialization process that turns most creative, talented and normal children into dependent and helpless adults. There are many aspects to child-rearing, but I would like to stress six.

(1) Children need love and need to be provided a safe, secure home that is full of warmth, love and challenges. (2) Teach by example, spending quality time with children providing options. (3) Be conscious of building self-love and self-esteem into your children. (4) Introduce your children to the unlimited possibilities of life. (5) Homes should be non-violent, and parents should be slow to criticize each other in front of children. (6) Most men give very little thought to a lifelong commitment that fathers should make to their children.

To be a parent you have to be there for your kids and not in prison. You have to realize that selling drugs, hanging out on corners, and carrying guns only lead to being in prison or six-feet under. We cannot do anything sitting up here behind bars. Why do youngsters ages 18 and 19 years old come to San Quentin? Because they do not have a role model; either their father is dead or in prison. We need to talk to these youngsters and try to steer them in the right direction, and explain to them that they need to be out there with their own kids. It starts at home!!! Youngsters need someone who is willing to listen and talk to them and try to instill in them that there is a better life out there for them. It starts at home!

FORGIVE ME. FORGIVE YOURSELF!

Forgive me. Forgive yourself. Forgive that in which I hold myself hostage to. Let it go. Whatever it is... big or small. Don’t be alarmed, by the way in which I express myself. Being myself. For I am a reflection of you. As you are a reflection of me. And the way to get free is to release the beast and release the peace. Forgiveness is a large part of that. Camisha stop the combat. Who are you angry at? What are you? Trying not to be trapped? Mean while, you are trapping yourself, instead of tapping into yourself. Tapping into your talent and gifts you have been given. Just listen... to the wisdom within. No need to reach outside of yourself for whatever you’re looking for, you have

Healing Our Wounds

Namaste, my brothers. I hope today finds you well and in good spirits. I wanted to write about healing, we must also talk about woundings, for the two go together. How can we transform our wounding so that they can become sources of strength which we can draw on in those moments when we are brought to our knees in grief and despair?

We are all – each one of us – deeply wounded. There is not a single person on this earth who has not sustained numerous woundings over the course of living. The wounds to our psyches are not as visible as those wounds that our bodies sustain. We carry our psychological wounds deep within us and it is much harder to heal those physical wounds.

Our life experiences and the realities that we live in have an impact on our mental and emotional health and well being. The ones that impact us negatively are our woundings. Some of these experiences of wounding we have more control over than others. The reality is that we live in a society in which there are many systems of oppression within which we must exist and which wound us very deeply, that is. things like racism, incarceration, sexism, classism or homophobia. In addition to these systems we also create our own wounding by engaging in behavior or activities that are not good for us (for example substance use, addictive behaviors or violence). Sometimes the very behaviors that are hurting us are the coping skills we have developed to try to deal with our woundings such as using drugs and alcohol.

It is very important to be aware of the difference between those factors and conditions

that society imposes upon us that create wounding and those that we impose upon ourselves. There are many places where the two intersect; and the impact on our mental and emotional health and wellness becomes even more profound as we turn the negative thoughts and beliefs about ourselves inwards and start to act them out. To quote James Baldwin: “You know it’s not the world that was my oppressor, because what the world does to you, if it does it to you long enough and effectively enough, you begin to do to yourself.”

Take a minute to think about what woundings you have sustained over the course of your life. How are they continuing

our experiences is ever lost – positive or negative. The person I am today is made up of my woundings as much as my successes, perhaps even more so because the woundings have made me stronger.

Some of the things we can do to create healing include not engaging in unhealthy behaviors that cause us to wound ourselves or others (for example substance use, violent behavior). Also, we can start to create community with others who are engaging in healthy behaviors and seeking to make changes to unhealthy lifestyles. In doing this we support our healing and that of others. Spiritual belief and practice is vital to our healing because it

“We end up operating from our wounded places and in doing so, wound others and ourselves.”

to impact your life, the choices you make and the behaviors you are engaging in? The reality is that unless we can start to heal our wounds they continue to bleed within us, causing us to stay in a cycle of wounding. We end up operating from our wounded places and in doing so, wound others and ourselves. If we are to heal ourselves and create healing within our communities, we have to break this cycle.

This brings me back to the questions I asked at the beginning of this article. How can I create healing for myself and perhaps for those in my life I have caused to be wounded through some of my actions?

Healing is a process. It will not happen overnight. Some wounds may never heal completely; but we can find a way to integrate them into who we are in a way that allows us to move forward in our lives. In doing so, we stop the bleeding. Nothing that has entered into

gives our lives meaning. Engaging in regular spiritual practice grounds us and gives us solace. Finally, engaging in healthy creative pursuits can be a way of transforming our wounds as well (for example writing, art, music, dance, etc...). These are just some of the ways that we can start to create healing.

Our wounds, if left unattended, continue to bleed and motive our behaviors. In creating healing for ourselves we can start to make changes to those behaviors we are engaging in that do not suit us and which are negatively impacting our lives and the lives of others. In starting to heal these wounds, and ourselves, our woundings become transformed into sources of strength we can draw upon in our time of need.

I would love to hear from you about the ways in which you create healing in your own life. Feel free to write to me c/o of the editor. Until next time, blessings...

— Helen Ameeta Singh

Prodigals Return to San Quentin

The sally port opens to clean grass, trees, birdsong, a raised pond, quadrangle guarded by ancient buildings open to blue evening sky, where water birds hungry for home careen over crenellated walls splash down in waiting pond.

Prodigals, fourteen siblings Once nested here as ducklings, now Return with friends—forty ducks swim In parade welcomed by blue shirted men glad as fathers with hearts flung wide rejoicing in the soft wild center of San Quentin State Prison.

—Judy Richardson

Raw Meat (2006)

Put your heart into song, You can’t help but write the truth; If your heart is loving, you can’t go wrong; The words you choose will be your proof. Your truth can be desire That burns like white hot fire

Searing soul with pain to prove Love a hell you pray heaven remove.

Or truth can be the grief When love is proved a lie.

How pain beyond belief Is why all day you die.

The lover’s heart is made of flesh, The poet’s heart is under geist;

To beat for songs sung to the muse, To feed Her hunger for amuse.

— John O. Neblett

Memories, Impressions and Gratitude

It Sitting Remote and Picturesque, a Ringed Fortress with Formidable Walls, Inhibiting Gates and Deadly Dark Watchtowers Containing Life-Altering and Lifetime Situations

Them Under Control- Abraham, David, Gary, Fernando, Camal, Ken, Michael, Terrell, James, Jay, John, Randy, Inhabiting Monk-like Cells Coping and Hoping Escaping by Learning and Creating

Them/Us Brilliant Dauntless, Articulate, Handsome, Proud and Powerful Manhood Fielding Questions/Probing Answers Practicing Reverence and Patience Presenting Quality and Value Sharing History, Awareness, Wisdom and Artistry

Me Grateful for the Experience and humbled by it.

—By: Wm H.

(An Outside Visitor to San Quentin)

all that you need and more. Even though your (maja) (Man/woman) or (mama)? may be unsure. You are pure. Even though your heart may be tore. Be an encore of authenticity. (Over & over again) Cause once in a lifetime happens every second. Check it.

Before, you wreck it. Be prepared to reassemble it. Stop trippin off what he did and what she did. Build your own crib. With patients, hanging, from the chandeliers. Constantly persevere. There is no fear, other than for the one we revere. Be clear.

— Camisha Fatimah

On the Line



Tom Brobst -San Quentin Librarian

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE IN SQ MAINLINE LIBRARY

By DAVID MARSH

From chillers to thrillers, mysteries to westerns and fantasy novels to reference books, good reading material recently got a good bit more plentiful at the San Quentin mainline library according to senior librarian Tom Brobst. Both serious and recreational readers will soon be able to enjoy the fruits of the librarian’s recent \$11,000 shopping spree at popular bookseller Barnes and Noble. That translates into approximately 1,000 new titles to add to the almost 33,000 volumes that already stock the library’s heavily laden shelves.

Brobst, a library veteran with over eight years spent working in the SQ library, estimates that approximately 70 percent of the recent purchases are paperbacks, with the rest being hardbound. Brobst and librarian

John Cornell were accompanied by education Vice-Principal Frank Kellum, who supervises the library, on the trip to Barnes and Noble. The trio used a request list compiled by the library’s patrons, as well as suggestions from the various programs run through the education department and just good old fashioned common sense in making their selections.

Library users will see for the first time a relatively new genre of paperbacks, the “Urban Novels,” which are written in contemporary street language. In addition, they have added non-fiction books on Black history, Native American history, a variety of texts intended to bolster course work of the classes taught through the education department, and a selection of other nonfiction works to cater to the more serious readers who frequent the library.

The library, located for the past year in the south end of the old laundry building, also features four daily newspapers and 44 monthly and weekly publications on topics as diverse as trucks to tennis and boating to parenting. The library caters to almost all mainline inmates, including Condemned Row and the Security Housing Unit program, and is open Monday thru Friday from 12:30 – 3 P.M., and evenings from 6-9 P.M. It’s also open on Saturday from 7 AM ‘til 3 PM.

Fantasy and Sci Fi are most popular among the library’s users, according to Brobst who guesses that the shelf life for a popular paperback is about one year. In the library’s future is a planned move to the new hospital building currently under construction and scheduled for completion in about two years. The move will almost double the library space.

The library’s patrons had to wait to get their hands on the recently purchased books until passage of the state’s budget. Now, the books are being marked, cataloged and placed on the shelves.

A good deal of the library’s purchases are made through Barnes and Noble, which offers the prison library a 25 percent discount. But the library will be struggling to replace its most prominent book supplier, Ingram Books. As a result of the state’s chronically delayed state budget approval process and subsequent late payments, Ingram, which offered the library a 40 percent discount, has decided that it will no longer do business with California’s prison libraries. Ingram was a valuable resource for the li-

QUARTERLY PACKAGE UPDATE

For North Block inmates with questions concerning quarterly package delivery, C/O Plagman will answer your questions. For H Unit inmates, C/O Moore handles your questions and the delivery of your packages. Regardless of your location in the institution, all packages are dispensed through the package window which is located on the Lower Yard near the Education complex.

North Block residents will find the package window open for them on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings, usually beginning right after count clears and continuing until everyone on the list has been served, typically about an hour to an hour and one-half. Package lists are posted in multiple locations on the walls in North Block.

For those in H Unit, Tuesday and Thursday evenings are designated for your quarterly package deliveries. The dorm officer will notify those on the package list during count time, and you can report to the package window during the program release time at 6:20 P.M..

According to both officers, the most commonly asked question they are faced with is “Why isn’t it here yet?” There are three main reasons which delay a package, according to Plagman. Those are: 1. It was not ordered when the you thought it was. 2. The vendor delays shipment pending the restocking of a particular item. 3. The package is returned to the vendor after arriving at the SQ warehouse in a damaged condition.

Packages are held for delivery for a period of two weeks after their arrival at SQ. A package unclaimed after the first week is listed on a supplementary list, and held for an additional week before being returned to the vendor. A package arriving up to five days into

a new quarter will be credited to the previous quarter. All packages should be verified for content while you are at the package window. Inmates receive a copy of the package invoice against which the contents are checked. If there is anything missing from the package, Plagman or Moore will contact the vendor and have the item shipped.

Books ordered from authorized vendors, two books per envelope, are delivered through the package window, and will not count as a quarterly package.

If you mail anything home, make certain that there will be someone there to accept delivery of the package. Inmates **must** provide an address for delivery, a post office box number will **not** be accepted! UPS will attempt delivery three times before returning the package to the institution. Any returned packages will be donated. Mail-outs can be done during open window. The box must be brought to the window without being sealed, and be accompanied by two filled-out trust withdrawal slips.

“Special Purchases” can include any electronic device (fan, TV, radio, hotpot, etc.), and are authorized once per year. You are allowed 12 CDs per package, and must turn in previously owned CDs in order to stay under the 12 CD per inmate limit.

All electronic devices are recorded on your property card. Do not throw away non-working electronic devices!!!! Return them for removal from your property card so that you may replace them at some time in the future.

Both Plagman and Moore ask for your patience when dealing with package delivery issues.

—David Marsh

A NEW EXPERIENCE

When I first came into San Quentin I had little expectations; what I found exceeded any expectations I might have had. I came for the TRUST (Teaching Responsibility Utilizing Sociological Teaching) food sale in May. I was invited by a professor I met at San Francisco State, a volunteer with the TRUST for over a year. A food sale is quite an experience, watching the hard work of the prisoners and the many volunteers. The men in TRUST asked me a lot of questions. Many wanted to know if prison was what I’d expected. My response was that I had little in the way of expectations, surprising some. Partly because I’ve seen very few prison stories on television in the first place. In addition, I try not to judge people without good reason. Forewarned about the type of men I would meet, I really enjoyed the experience of working side by side and talking with them. I learned a lot,

about both prison and them.

The next time I came to San Quentin was for a TRUST general body meeting. Since that meeting I’ve been coming in twice a week, participating in the weekly Thursday workshop as a co-facilitator. The topics that we cover can apply to anyone’s life, and I even learned a great deal during these workshops myself. It’s great to hear the men’s perspectives on the various topics and issues that come up during the sessions. What’s even more impressive is that the men actually facilitate the classes themselves; watching their weekly preparations and planning is amazing. The men of the San Quentin TRUST have greatly impacted my life. My coming to San Quentin is more than luck to me. I’ve learned a completely different side of the prison, one rarely portrayed in the media; a side that more people should know about.

—Erica Duggan, Volunteer

VIDEO LITERACY PROJECT

The Video Literacy Project will begin airing half-hour weekly episodes on SQTV beginning Nov. 1. Host Judy Breen will interview SQ readers and writers, along with an occasional outside guest, about books for recommended reading. With a focus on great reads, the interviews, filmed by members of the SQTV production crew, will cover topics as diverse as science fiction, fantasy, self-improvement, books by living writers, prize-winning books, best-selling books and will occasionally explore the guest’s own writing.

The series is produced with the co-operation of the San Quentin Library, and the materials reviewed and discussed during the program can be browsed and checked out on a special shelf in the library. A mail box will be set up to collect subject matter recommendations from viewers.

EVEN EDITORS NEED HELP

The Patten University College Program is currently teaching a beginning journalism class. The class includes all inmates listed as being a part of the San Quentin News. The mission of the SQ News is to report everything to the population that will help make informed decisions for those in prison. Mistakes happen in “real” newspapers every day.

We have put out requests for help from the population, as well as the journalism class, and it has been answered on many fronts. An Advisory Board has been formed, and is now meeting with the fledgling news editors. Its members include: Steve McNamara, former owner of the Pacific Sun, Steve Cook, former reporter for the Marin Independent Journal and San Francisco Examiner, and Joan Lisetor, a former writer for the San Francisco Chronicle, and previous advisor to the SQ News during its earlier operation.

Our mentor is John Eagan, retired Associated press writer, and former chief editor of the Novato Advance and Petaluma Argus Courier. He is also the former publisher of the Marinscope Community Newspaper. Eagan is looking over our shoulder, and using his years of wisdom to get the SQ News back up to what it once was - an award-winning publication. It’s NOT there yet, and we know it. We hope and expect continued improvement, and appreciate your future support and input.

Opinion

FIGHT OR DIE! A Legal Battle

Such hard words, yet very true. I feel compelled to write this to all Lifers going to the Board. I am in no way, shape or form speaking about physical violence. Because I abhor any violence that hurts another human being. However, as I am writing this piece, I thought of all our Lifer brothers that have passed on, never having had another chance at freedom. Although many will argue that point, it is not the freedom I am speaking of. We should not wag and shake our heads when we hear of another Lifer brother expiring. Rather, we should look at ourselves and ask ourselves, “What am I doing to make sure that we spend our last days on the streets?” Living our last days as productive citizens, and showing our community that we indeed have changed. The fight that I am speaking of is contesting the illegal practices of the Board of Prison Hearings. The practice of illegally denying Lifers parole and in turn changing our 15-year-to-life and 25-year-to-life sentences to a death-in-prison sentence.

I opened my piece in this manner because recently a motion from the Attorney General was filed in a Lifer’s case that my bro is working on. The mo-

tion stated that the Attorney General’s office has assigned a total of 12 attorneys to the 700 Lifer cases that have been filed, contesting their denial of parole. That is a down-right shame that out of about 4,000 Lifer hearings held each year, only 700 hearings are being contested. That is really something to think about when you’re sitting at the pinocchio table, while you are playing basketball all day, or exerting all of your energy to make the baseball team. It is a sad statistic to see that more Lifers have died in prison than have been paroled, when parole is supposed to be the rule rather than the exception. If you, fellow Lifer, think that all the chrono-chasing is going to get you out, think again! Although you are doing the best you can to show the Board that you have changed, do you really think they care? Think again, because the Board is not playing fair, nor do they care! After reading many transcripts and seeing their reasons for denial, I know that they do not care.

If you are waiting for another Lifer’s case to make a landmark decision to let you out, think again. The truth of the matter, my Lifer brother, is that you either fight or, sadly,

you will die. Just marinate on this. Recently in the Mike Ngo case, evidence was provided that in June 2006, out of 245 parole hearings, 243 prisoners were denied parole because the Board found that the crimes were particularly egregious. If you happen to be one of those lottery parole date winners, what do you think your chances of ‘passing go’ are? With the Governor’s review? Think about it, when there are only 700 Lifer’s cases being litigated out of 4,000 hearings every year, don’t think that 700 cases are actually being contested annually, some of those cases may be carry-overs from lower court denials. That may mean that in two or three years, out of actually 12,000 hearings, only 700 are being contested.

When the time piece strikes twelve of another Lifer’s life in this world, do not wag or shake your head, do not blame the medical staff or any other entity. Rather, think about the efforts you put forth to prevent such an outcome. Think about how much advantage you took of all the programs and education programs that the warden has provided us with, and then in turn used that education to win your freedom. For those Lifers who have fought and died, I salute you. However, for us who are still alive, it is way beyond the time to do something in the legal arena. You are not dead yet, and it ain’t over til it’s over. If you want help ask around, there are many who are willing to help you. Because when it is all said and done and all the excuses are used up, you are either going to fight or die--or die trying.

—Noel Valdivia



Noel Valdivia

Schadenfreude

By BANJO

Webster’s definition of Schadenfreude is, “Joy at the misery of others.” In 1997 in Haifa a seaside city in Israel, an old Jewish man told me that it was Hitler’s favorite word. I’ve often wondered how a German word made it into an English dictionary. Whatever its origin, it’s the word that immediately sprang to mind when I heard a few of my fellow felons discussing my friend Michael R. Harris’ Parole Board appearance.

Harris was denied parole for the third time on September 25th. The inmates I heard discussing, Michael’s case made cavalier remarks about how having a lawyer and money doesn’t guarantee your release. Astonishingly, they were laughing about it. Bad news seems to travel fast at San Quentin. Maybe it’s no different than any other microcosm of society. However this was devastating news to me.

Michael was denied because the board determined that he failed to demonstrate insight into his crime. One should acknowledge that they understand the consequences of their actions. But what if for 21 years you have maintained your innocence? What if the alleged victim shows up at your hearing and declares: “He didn’t do it,” is it possible to show remorse or insight into something you didn’t do? If you did claim remorse wouldn’t it appear disingenuous?

I don’t know whether Mike did or didn’t commit the crime of which he was convicted. I’ve never asked him. It’s not the sort of thing you ask other inmates. But these circumstances apply: a) he claims he didn’t do it and b) the victim appeared at his parole hearing and confirmed his innocence. Does the Parole Board have a fiduciary responsibility to ascertain that

an inmate is qualified to return to society? Should they be bound to using reasonable and secular criteria to determine this? The answer, of course, is a resounding ‘yes’ on both counts. The board knows you were found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Not beyond *all doubt*, only the victim or the defendant knows that. Therefore, asking one to express insight into a crime you claim you didn’t commit as a condition of parole is in violation of the U.S. Constitution.

There is plenty of other criteria to ascertain ones suitability for parole such as employment, housing, disciplinary record, self-help programs completed, family support, education etc. There is no worldly way to determine whether one would recidivate.

Recently I had a discussion with two long-tenured CDCR (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation) employees whom I respect. They told me that as correctional professionals one develops a sixth sense about inmates, and can spot a recidivist a mile away. Now I don’t know whether I believe this or not, but I do believe that they believe it. My point is that if the Parole Board is made up of individuals of similar backgrounds, it is apparent that such non-secular techniques are being used. Was it not Shakespeare that once said that no decision is void of self political interest?

I can say without bias that Michael Harris is suitable for parole. His parole plans by the board’s own admissions are impeccable. Of the almost 5,000 parole hearings held in 2007, approximately 80 inmates were released, and most of those were court-ordered. Now either CDCR is doing a lousy job of the “R” in their acronym, or inmates aren’t the only ones guilty of Schadenfreude.

A 3rd STRIKER’S SYMBIOSIS

I’ve now come to the realization that even as a three striker, I can recommit myself to our community, out there, where the violence rears its ugly head.

I joined Team Exodus Sept. 6, 2008, and this time, it wasn’t for me. You see, I’ve been indulging myself on positive groups at San Quentin, from Non-Verbal Communication, Keepin’-It-Real, Day of Peace, and various college courses, just to name a few. Team Exodus gave me an opportunity to give back to the community.

I, as a Team Exodus member and a reporter for the *San Quentin News*, interviewed a young man concerning what might be done to stop the violence in our communities. My subject was Paul, a 21-year-old

resident from West Oakland, incarcerated for drug offenses.

Q: “What is the most important thing that you need to maintain a life free of violence?” A: “Help like this, because out there I don’t know where to go for help. It’s hard to do the right things I need to do if I don’t know where to go.” Q: “What curriculum have you taken at SQ?” A: “The Bridging program. It’s a good program, it helps me to learn to communicate with others as well as my daughter.” Q: “What’s your biggest fear upon being released?” A: “Not being able to get a job.”

I assured Paul that the Job Fair was designed to help him realize his employment goals. Along with that, I told him how I once secured a job by volun-

teering to work for free. I told the supervisor I had nothing better to do but to hang out in the neighborhood, that I’d give him a free eight hours just to stay out of trouble.

Well, I was told to go fill up that wheelbarrow with water, *and that’s just not easy*. At the end of the day, the boss told me to come on back, and that I was hired. Paul listened with a smile on his face and said, “I’ll remember that and use it if I have to.”

I told Paul to do just that, and, if by chance he wasn’t hired on the spot, he’d certainly be the first one that they’d call in when an opening came up. “I know they will,” was his response to me. And with that, we returned to the rest of my questions for Paul. Q: “Paul, just

exactly what can we do to stop the violence out there?” A: Paul’s response was beautiful! “Get myself together by getting that job and then talk to the kids, letting them know that’s not it! Spend time with them; listen to them. I really want to do that because I grew up without pops, so I know how that is.” Q: The last question was “What do you do out there, Paul?” A: “I sing man, and R&B is my thang.”

And with that, we concluded what had been my first interview as a *San Quentin News* correspondent. I am grateful for this opportunity to give back to the community, and, in doing so, I was able to reach out and to encourage one young man to make some positive changes in his life, and perhaps even to

reach out and help others. What is my benefit? The reawakening of the humankind within myself and the joy to me that it brings *Symbiosis*.

—Monta Kevin Tindall

QUOTABLE QUOTES

We cannot force those we want to forgive into accepting our forgiveness. They might not be able or willing to do so. They may not even know or feel that they have wounded us. We can only change ourselves. Forgiving others is first and foremost healing our own hearts. —Henri J.M. Nouwen

I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain. —James Baldwin

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. —Nelson Mandela

Inmate Transfers

What you need to know

Continued from page 1

Diane Trumpy is the assistant classification and parole representative at San Quentin. It is her job to identify and screen inmates who meet transfer criteria from a list she receives from the COCF office in Sacramento.

Trumpy cited institutional security in declining to reveal specific numbers of SQ inmates involved in the transfer program, but acknowledged the number is growing. “They are part of a continuing process of which SQ is expected to contribute its share,” said Trumpy, who agreed to be interviewed for this story.

Trumpy says that the eligibility criteria for transfers changes with each new round of transfers initiated in Sacramento. For example, the most recent list that Trumpy has received from Sacramento contains the names of inmates who, among other things, received no visits from May 2007 thru May 2008, and whose remaining terms range from a minimum of six months to 30 years.

From that list, Trumpy deletes the names of non-eligible inmates, including Lifers, high security inmates (level 4), minimum custody inmates (level 1), and institutional critical workers. Validated gang members are also ineligible, unlike street gang members, who are subject to transfer.

For those whose names remain on her list, the process begins with a face-to-face notification from a Correctional Counselor I that the inmate has been selected for inclusion in the out-of-state transfer program, and that participation is mandatory. Inmates are then offered an opportunity to meet with a state-supplied attorney,

under contract to the state from the George School of Law, who will advise them of their appeal rights.

Each inmate is screened for both physical and mental health concerns, according to Trumpy, and then endorsed by the CSR for a transfer to an out-of-state facility. After being endorsed, an inmate can choose to make use of the specially expedited 602 appeals process.

At SQ, the three-stage appeals process is handled by CCII R. Brau of the Inmate Appeals Office. Brau, the inmate appeals coordinator, emphasizes that no inmates are actually shipped out prior to completion of the second level of appeal. An incomplete third level process will not prevent transfer of an inmate, although every effort is made to complete the appeals process before the transfer, according to Brau.

Brau states that two inmates have successfully delayed their transfers on appeal due to pending medical procedures. In addition, he has several appeals pending. Although many inmates have consulted an attorney, the number who filed an appeal is quite low, Brau said.

Sensitive Needs inmates, also known as Protective Custody prisoners, can elect to transfer out-of-state, but there currently are no out-of-state Sensitive Needs Yards for inmate segregation. “That also is about to change,” says Brau, “and the new contract will include the development of Sensitive Needs Yards at the COCFs.” When that happens, sensitive needs inmates will be involuntarily shipped out as well, according to Brau.

Brau noted that the mix of inmates at SQ, with its large number of ineligible Lifers and high security and minimum security inmates, SQ has a rela-

tively low number of inmates available for the transfer program. Those selected for transfer reside in North Block and H Unit.

The ever-shifting criteria for eligibility, says Brau, means that inmates fresh from reception to the mainline are now being diverted to the program as well, increasing the number of inmates at SQ that are eligible for transfer.

Inmates at SQ that are currently involved in various stages of the transfer process and interviewed for this story have expressed misgivings as to what awaits California inmates upon their arrival at one of the COCFs.

An informational video released by the CDCR in 2006 shows state of the art facilities featuring weight training equipment and roomy gymnasiums and air-conditioned facilities. According to the video, California inmates will not be allowed to smoke or use tobacco products, and most CDCR rules and regulations will still apply, including rules for good-time, work-time. Self-help programs such as NA, AA, Anger Management, etc. will be offered to inmates as well.

“California law requires that inmates be housed in a suitable place of confinement that will maintain standards of care and discipline comparable to those of CDCR,” the video says.

An inmate transferred to the North Fork Correctional Facility in Oklahoma wrote back praising the 43 channels offered on TV, the fact that inmates can possess Playstations, minimum 30 cents per-hour pay numbers, and a variety of other “perks” offered at the facility.

—David Marsh & Michael R. Harris

never knew his name...

I guess I never really knew him, though for 2 1/2 weeks I thought I had come to know him well. But I’m very bad with names, always have been, so to me, he was ‘Bunkie’, ‘cause that’s what he was – my Bunkie. And he always had a friendly word for me, or anyone else for that matter.

Tonight in H Unit, while coming out of the chow hall, I hit the deck when the Dorm 1 alarm went off. I sat there for awhile and watched the ambulance come and, finally, go. Word came to us that it was a “man down,” and that he had stopped breathing. Thinking back, I’m not really sure what I thought about that, and maybe I simply decided not to think about it, then I went about my business.

Only later did someone tell me who had died, that it was my “Bunkie.” That he had simply lain down on his bunk to rest...and died. With two months left on a sentence that had inadvertently become a death sentence.

And then it occurred to me that...this man who I had taken a liking to in the brief time that

I knew him, who always said ‘hello’ in passing, and I didn’t even know his name. And as I asked around of others who had known him and had shared greetings with him on a regular basis, I came to realize that none knew his name. He had come and gone in anonymity. Many had known him, however briefly, and many had liked him. But none knew his name.

It’s like that in prison, many of us coming and going all the time, with most never leaving anything resembling a permanent impression. And no constants in out lives. And sometimes, not even a name.

It’s possible that months from now my Bunkie won’t even be a memory for many people. But I liked him, and already I miss him.

Rick. His name was Rick. Richard Simpson, or at least that’s what the c/o told me my Bunkie’s name was. Rest in peace, Rick. You were a good man, a good Bunkie, and at least I oughta know your name.

Richard Simpson...2-1-58 — 9-23-08

—David Marsh

MY EXPERIENCE WITH SQTV

I am a Lifer employed at San Quentin Television (SQTV) within San Quentin's Education Department, where I have worked since late-September 2005, a month and a half since I transferred here from Pleasant Valley State Prison. Prior to being incarcerated, I already had musical skills in that I play

guitar, keyboards, and bass and I also had strong computer skills. Unfortunately, I didn't

I work on equipment that video professionals use in the "real world" on a daily basis.

take advantage of these talents. Currently my title is “Video Production Coordinator”, and I work with four other people at SQTV under the supervision of Television Specialist Larry Schneider, as well as five graduates of the Discovery Channel Film School. My capacity is to coordinate and perform camera shoots for the many groups and programs here at San Quentin utilizing high-definition cameras. This enables me to edit the footage on one of the four Apple iMacs the Discovery Channel donated to the Film School. With this I am able to create the finished product for internal broadcast on the SQTV system and media for various educational groups. I also create original music scores for videos we produce here, either solo or in collaboration with one of my co-workers, “Blue” Wilder.

It is an intense job; people come from the inside and the outside with projects. Yet this job supplies me with valuable knowledge as to the ins and outs of media production. Because of the generosity and vision of Radical Media and the Discovery Channel, I work on equipment that video professionals use in the

"real world" on a daily basis. For example, Final Cut Pro is the industry staple, and with the many features this software has, I can see why video producers swear by this valuable tool. I would love the opportunity to use the skills I am learning and developing on projects once I am again in the free world.

I believe there are an abundance of opportunities in media production (i.e. movies, music videos, etc.) and especially freelancing, so I want to make my contribution out there. I would like to let the public know what rehabilitation can do for someone formerly incarcerated, but also to help spread the message to young people who live in a disenfranchised reality. To teach them that they too can learn this marketable trade of video production, and remove themselves from the vicious cycle of unemployment that permeates their community.

—E. Phillips

Printed by
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San Quentin News

USPS 4870-700

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Thanks for all the help from everyone!*

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San Quentin News

THE PULSE OF SAN-QUENTIN

VOL. 2008 NO. 4

NOVEMBER 10, 2008

SAN QUENTIN, CALIFORNIA 94964

POPULATION: 5,435

A Victory For America

By ALY TAMBOURA

In an election that is truly one for the history books, Barack Obama won his bid for the White House in a sweeping victory, capturing an overwhelming number of the nation's electoral college votes in a fashion which the nation has rarely seen.

By 7:30 pacific time, Fox News had announced Obama the victor and president-elect. The other major networks followed suit of the announcement, forecasting Obama as the next president. Over the next few hours, as the vote counts were broadcast on television, it became evident that Obama had overwhelmingly won the election.

Obama made his victory speech to a quarter of a million supporters in Chicago's Grant Park shortly after the networks announced him the victor. The speech moved many in the crowd to tears of joy, including celebrities such as Jesse Jackson and Oprah Winfrey, who were both in attendance. Obama's message of change was clear in his speech, along with a direct appeal for help from the American people.



President-Elect Barack Obama

"The road ahead will be long. Our climb will be steep. We may not get there in one year or even one term, but America, I have never been more hopeful than I am tonight that we will get there," said Obama.

Obama used the story of

106-year old Ann Nixon Cooper as a symbol of the African-American struggle.

"Born just a generation past slavery, but for many years could not vote for two reasons, because she was a woman and because of the color of her skin.

See **Obama**, Page 5



Volunteers Doris Fendt and Kathryn Jackson at the ballot box
(Photo by Troy Williams)

Prisoners Conduct Mock Election

By KAMAL SEFELDEEN

In a well organized peaceful civil-dissent to state law that prohibits state prisoners and parolees from voting in local municipalities and national elections, San Quentin inmates conducted a mock election on Oct. 25 which marked the beginning of absentee voting in California.

The ballot contained the presidential candidates, Obama-Biden (Democrat), McCain-Palin (Republican), Nader-Gonzales (Independent) and McKinney-Clemente (Green Party). It also included five state propositions from the Nov. 4 election, Proposition 5—the Nonviolent Offender Rehabilitation Act (Nora), Proposition 6—The Safe Neighborhood Act, Proposition 7—Renewable

Fuel Sources, Proposition 8—Protect Marriage Act, and Proposition 9—Victim's Rights and Protection Act.

Classrooms became voting stations and community volunteers became poll workers and election monitors.

Inmates lined up for voting, each presenting his prison I.D. with picture identification at the check-in table where a volunteer and an inmate marks his name in the official print-out provided by the administration.

"Just to make sure nobody votes twice," says Red, 57, an inmate with a big smile.

"I voted against Proposition 8, because I don't think they should amend the Constitution. I voted against Proposition 9, because it's a vengeful bill," says Red.

See **Mock Election**, Page 2

California Officials Openly Defy Federal Judge

By DAVID MARSH

California officials face fines of up to \$2 million per day for refusing a federal judge's order to turn over more than \$250 million in state funds. The money is needed to jump-start construction on more than \$8 billion in improvements ordered to bring the medical facilities in its state prisons up to constitutional standards.

The state's long-running battle with U.S. District Judge Thelton Henderson heated up Oct. 25 when lawyers for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and State Controller John Chiang questioned the judge's authority to force the state to hand over the funds. They also questioned his authority to order the changes in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's medical facilities.

Henderson, in 2006 appointed a federal overseer to manage the state's beleaguered prison health care system. He responded to the attack on his authority at the hearing with an order that the funds be transferred by Nov. 5. Failure to

comply with his directive will result in both Schwarzenegger and Chiang facing a hearing for contempt the following week, the judge said. That raises the potential for as much as \$2 million per day in fines, he said.

Deputy Attorney General Daniel Powell told Henderson that although the state has the funds, it is the state's position that Henderson has failed to provide sufficient information regarding his plans for the money. He said that any plans that Henderson has for state prison construction must be approved by the Legislature before the state will release any funds.

Plans submitted by the federal manager, law professor Clark Kelso, call for the building of seven prison health care centers, a dental care center and improving some existing facilities.

The state faces a trial in federal court Nov. 17 before a three-judge panel that will include Henderson. Among the issues to be decided during the trial are claims that chronic overcrowding has led to unconstitutionally sub-standard medical care.

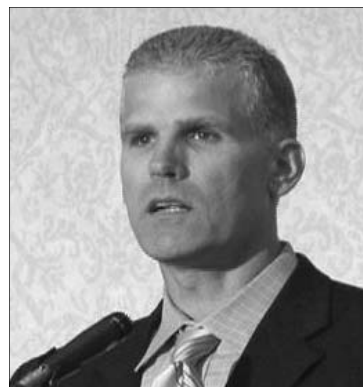
Centerforce Holds 2008 Prison Reform Summit

By NAN SINCERO

The Pew Center on the States has stated that there are now more than one in 100 adults incarcerated in the United States – more than any other nation.

Centerforce, whose mission is to support, educate and advocate for individuals, families and communities impacted by incarceration, hosted its 9th Annual "Inside/Out Summit" on Oct. 6-7 at the Double Tree Sonoma Wine Country in Rohnert Park, California. The theme, *More Than One in One Hundred: the Crisis, the Issues, the Solutions*, was in response to the report that came out.

The successful two-day event included 15 workshops on a variety of subjects: Reentry, Employment and Mental Health, Employment for Veterans, Substance Abuse Treatment, Eliminating the Death Penalty, California Prop. 5 (NORA), Props. 6&9, Inside Arts Programs, Visitation Programs, Restorative Justice, HIV Programming, Supporting Children and Families, Making, Mending and Maintaining Rela-



Matthew Cate,
Secretary of CDCR

tionships, and Advocacy.

Special panelists and speakers included, Secretary of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Matthew Cate, actor of M*A*S*H fame Mike Farrell, Chief Medical Officer Receiver Clark Kelso, Dr. Terry Hill, and Centerforce Executive Director Carol F. Burton. The keynote speech was delivered by Superior Court Judge and author Norbert Ehrenfreund who was a journalist at the Nuremberg Trials in 1945. His powerful and emotional message resonated through the hall as he spoke passionately about the

legacy of Nuremberg and its effects on due process and fair trial. He also addressed the audience as an influential force – a large group of people who understand three words: "people can change."

Special plenary sessions included: The 2nd Annual Socratic Dialogue, Incarcerated Medicine Session, Sentencing Reform Caucus, and Ask-a-Funder. Phillip Jay Seiler, a formerly incarcerated lifer at San Quentin Prison participated on the Socratic Dialogue panel along with representatives from 10 organizations; California Inspector General, David Shaw; CCPOA, Pam Douglas; Stanford Criminal Justice Center, Kara Dansky; Prison Law Office, Don Specter; Prison Legal News, Paul Wright; Crime Victims United of California, Nina Salarno-Ashford; Probation-Parole and former Warden of San Quentin, Jeanne Woodford; author of 3 books on incarceration, Sasha Abramsky; Vacaville Police Chief, Rich Word, and Taxpayers for Improving public Safety, David Warren.

See **Centerforce**, Page 2

No More Tears

‘Putting a Face On Crime’



Top Row: Lonnie Morris, Jerry Elster, George Jurand, No More Tears Group
Bottom Row: Mona and Bobby G. Hall Sr., Maddie Scott and Paulette Brown

An Interview with Denise Banister of No More Tears

By MICHAEL R. HARRIS

San Quentin News: What is No More Tears, and what role do you play in it?

Denise Banister: NMT is a violence and crime prevention program conceived of by SQ prisoners. It was developed through collaboration between NMT founders Lonnie Morris,

Jerry Elster, Bobby Dean Evans, Jr., and Lafayette Nelson, community and staff volunteers Vernell Crittendon, Mick Gardner, Cat Aboudara and Yolanda Najera, of Centerforce. Centerforce is the umbrella organization over NMT. The Muslim Chaplain, R.S. Hassan, is the chief sponsor of NMT, as well as a founding member. I am a co-sponsor of NMT, serve on the steering committee, perform administrative duties for the program, coordinate volunteer efforts

and help implement workshops and events.

SQN : What inspired you to work with NMT? And how long has the organization been in existence?

D.B.: NMT was “born” in 2001. I came on board in 2004. What inspired me to work with NMT was the hope I experienced when I first came to San Quentin to observe the program. Let me say that again; I found HOPE at San Quentin. I almost didn’t come that first day; I was skeptical and expected to find just another group of people who sit around talking about issues of violence in our communities; I was so tired of talk. I grew up in Oakland, Berkeley and Richmond, and was disheartened by the deterioration of those communities due to disenfranchisement, economic disparities, and the infusion of drugs and dwindling of economic opportunities. What I found at NMT was a group of dedicated people working to proactively address all the issues underlying the growing violence in our communities; particularly the youth-on-youth violence.

See *Healing Circle*, Page 3



Candelaria Podesta registering prisoners to vote
(Photo by Troy Williams)

Mock Election

Continued from Page 1

Scott, 47, an inmate standing by the voting classroom conducting an exit-poll said, “I’m doing this to see how close our thinking process aligns with the outside community. It shows, even though we are not allowed to vote, that we are still involved and pay attention to the issues affecting our community.”

Mike Dunne, a community volunteer in S.Q. Film Makers Project, followed by a handful of inmates with expensive TV cameras, believes in rehabilitation instead of incarceration. “This idea of conducting voting here at S. Q. at the start of the absentee voting in California is an idea and a project by the inmates themselves. It has historic implications. It’s voting of the un-counted. It’s training for the inmates to follow the issues and to form independent decisions based upon what is real, and objectively caring rather than subjective interests,” says Dunne.

According to Dunne, the ballots will be tabulated and sealed until Nov. 4. Similar voting will take place for inmates in H-Unit. Today’s designated for the 743 inmates of North Block. The check-in records reflect that 66 percent of the population voted in this mock election.

“In Europe over 75 percent of eligible voters vote. I know how it feels to be disenfranchised. I’m one of the disenfranchised. I can’t vote because I’m not a citizen. This election is about the men here. There are too many issues at stake in this election. I would like them to have hope by connecting to common issues,” says Doris, a German citizen and a graduate of San Francisco State University with a degree in psychology. Doris, who refers to S.Q. inmates as “the men,” believes that Prop. 9 is catastrophic. “We ought to direct our social

education toward building a society of citizens rather than of consumers,” said Doris, before paying full attention to the entire football team, arriving in their team uniforms to vote. Someone said, “They may run-out of ballots.” Another inmate shouted “Florida, Florida!” Laughter and comments before Doris responded, “We have the ballot template, and if we need more we will get copies.”

Kathleen, a seventh-grade teacher who teaches English to S.Q. inmates participating in Patten University, believes that a great number of the inmates are more aware of the socio-economic issues than many people on the outside. She finds most of the inmates knowledgeable, engaging and seeking redemption by trying to learn more. “This election gives them a sense of hope that someone really cares,” says Kathleen, who is not a democrat but does intend to vote for Obama, “because he gives hope to many.”

When asked if this mock election would make any difference, she responded with deep earnestness, “There is a man who came and voted, and after he was done he said, ‘I don’t feel like a criminal right now.’ The fact (that) people don’t understand that people can change is a crime,” says Kathleen.

In Switzerland, the government faces pandemic drug addictions. They don’t consider it a criminal problem, but they consider it a health problem that requires a health solution.

The advocates of the Swiss solution say that criminalizing similar problems in the U.S. would enlarge the problem, that sending adolescents and adults to prison for drug use would expand the power of a corporate vigil-ustice driven by a rich lobby. Others advocate Prop—5 as a solution.

Student Injured in Print Shop

By ALY TAMBOURA

Andre Taylor, a vocational student, was seriously injured while operating a paper cutter in the San Quentin Print Shop. Taylor’s hand was caught in the clamp which holds the paper for cutting, as a result, three of the fingers on his right hand were crushed and partially severed.

The seriousness of the injuries warranted emergency response by the San Quentin Fire

Department which arrived on the scene within minutes of the accident. Taylor was stabilized and transported to an outside hospital for emergency surgery. Taylor was returned to the prison infirmary after surgery where he is recovering.

According to the infirmary staff, Taylor’s fingers were reattached and he is expected to make a full recovery and is expected to retain the use of his hand.

Print shop instructor John

Wilkerson says, “All students are trained to safely operate the equipment in the Print Shop and are constantly reminded of safe-operating procedures throughout their vocational training.”

The paper cutter involved in the accident has been taken off-line until completion of the investigation by the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The accident remains under investigation.

Centerforce Summit

Continued from Page 1

The moderator was Ron Clement, formerly of the Haigh-Scatena Foundation. The format of the Socratic Dialog involves revealing a hypothetical scenario in which the



Phillip Jay Sieler

panelists must discuss outcomes in order to foster positive solutions.

The Incarceration Medicine Session was moderated by Dr.

Jacqueline Tulskey and featured an update on the Receivership by Dr. Terry Hill, chief medical officer under Receiver Clark Kelso. Panelists who posed questions to Dr. Hill were Doctors Lisa Pratt, MD of San Quentin and Denise Taylor, MD of California Men’s Colony. The session was followed by an audience question and answer period.

The Sentencing Reform Caucus was moderated by Carol F. Burton and included panelists Mike Farrel of Death Penalty Focus, Dan Abrahamson of Drug Policy Alliance and Elizabeth Gaynes of Osborne Association. This session was unique because it included questions for the panel that were blogged into the Centerforce website prior to the Summit.

This year the “Jeanne Woodford Award,” for recognition of Outstanding Leadership in Pro-active Correctional Community Collaboration, went to San



Norbert Ehrenfreund

Quentin Warden Robert Ayers, Jr.

The Socratic Dialogue keynote speech featured Secretary Cate. Incarceration Medicine and the Sentencing Reform Caucus will air on SQTV sometime in November or December. Look for your weekly programming updates!

Article provided by



Flu Vaccine is being Offered

By DOCTOR ELENA TOOTELL, CMO

Flu Season is here once again. On Nov. 7 and Nov. 8, vaccinations were given out to those who wanted them. Flu is spread easily, and the older we get, the worse it can affect us.

If you have any kind of health condition, like heart disease, lung disease, asthma, kidney disease, diabetes, HIV, or seizures disorders, getting the flu can be much worse. Last year a prison in Southern California didn’t vaccinate everyone, and some died from complications.

“I don’t want a shot; it’ll make me sick,” is what many people say. You CAN’T get the flu by getting a flu shot. You need vaccination every year. If you have had an allergic reaction to a previous vaccination, or if you’re allergic to eggs, you need to tell that to the nurse.

Our nurses are trained to give injections properly, and, IT WON’T HURT for longer than a second. It’s worth the small inconvenience.

A Portrait From the Past

Clinton Duffy: Mr. San Quentin 1940-51

By **DON (COACH) DENEVI**

No one would have believed that as late as the summer of 1940 San Quentin was on the brink of deadly riots certain to reverse efforts in rehabilitation by 100 years.

San Quentin was considered a “modern” prison where Warden Jimmy Johnston had ended officer barbarism in 1919 and Warden James Holohan instilled imprisoned men with new dignity and inspiration in the 1930s.

Now the tough, hard-boiled Warden Court Smith had adamantly refused to end “the shame of San Quentin,” a 50-foot long dungeon that was constructed under the old hospital with seven niches cut into the subterranean rock on each side to serve as cells. Hundreds of convicts trembled with so much hate and fear that some were arming themselves to escape or kill as many guards as they could.

With the growing crisis no longer kept secret from a public well aware that the “Big House By the Bay” was a city of nightmares, Gov. Culbert Olson ousted the entire Board of Prison directors. And on the

morning of July 13, a new five man board convened in the conference room of the warden’s office at San Quentin to fire Smith. Four years of bloodshed, strife, and some officers insisted, rot and corruption during his brief tenure were about to end. Clinton Truman Duffy, a 42-year-old Parole Board secretary who was born, bread, married and now lived on the prison grounds, was summoned along with several other witnesses for questioning about the increasing abuses and chaos.

“I sat on a long polished bench outside the meeting room for what seemed like hours, mopping my face and listening to the wildest kind of rumors,” Duffy wrote 10 years later in his autobiography: *The San Quentin Story*. “I was sure I was due for the chopping block since a number of official heads had already been lopped off that morning. Then and there I made up my mind to quit prison work for good. Warden Smith was called before the new board around noon and for several hours loud voices filtered out into the hall. Smith emerged at



Clinton Duffy: Warden 1940-1951

four o’clock and clumped down the hall and out the door without a word.”

After several other flushed and nervous administrators entered and exited the conference room, someone called out, “Duffy, you’re wanted inside.” Duffy walked in and sat down, wiping his glasses to conceal his nervousness. He didn’t want to get fired; he wanted to quit. After all, his father had been a highly respected guard for more than 30 years. Suddenly someone said, “We have not agreed upon a new warden. You’ve

been around here all your life and you know all the spots. We understand your dad taught you the cardinal rule of reform: no man can ever be redeemed by using the whip. How about taking over for the next 30 days?”

Duffy, from his autobiography, writes, “I could have crawled under the rug. ‘Taking over?’ I asked mechanically.”

“Yes, as acting warden.”

It was about six o’clock when Duffy called his wife Gladys about the news. They reflected upon how their old way of life was finished and that he was now assuming a great responsibility to the people of California and to the thousands of men behind the walls. “Before I come home, I have something important to do,” he said quietly and hung up.

Duffy then walked down San Quentin’s long main street to the house closest to the East Gate and knocked on the door. Captain Ralph New, under whom guards had used the dungeon, the straps, and

the rubber hoses so frequently they had cost an old warden his job, opened the door. The unsmiling new acting warden said simply, ‘I’ve just been appointed to take control of the prison and staff. I’m making changes and as of this minute, you’re through.’ He turned and walked back to the warden’s office.

Upon entering the deserted office, he immediately telephoned Joseph Fletcher, a guard he had observed for years. “I’m appointing you Captain of the Yard and your first official act within the next hour is to abolish the dungeon.”

“By eight o’clock that night, the moldy, foul 50-foot cave where hundreds of men had suffered unbelievable tortures through the decades had ceased to exist,” Duffy would say in later years.

Part two of this three part biographical sketch of “Mister San Quentin,” as Time Magazine referred to him in a January 7, 1942, article, will appear in the next issue of the SQ News.

Healing Circle

Continued from Page 2

I felt the genius of the program was that men who had once been the offenders were now the mentors for positive change and healing. They reminded me of some very special individuals who took time to mentor me in my youth and turned me from the path of self-destruction. NMT allows me to give back, to thank those who helped me, to serve my community; and as I said, it gives me hope.

SQN: What is the Mission Statement of NMT?

D.B.: NMT Mission Statement: To curb violence and detrimental behaviors within targeted communities by utilizing the specialized knowledge and experience of former perpetrators of violence and crime. These former perpetrators hold themselves accountable to bring solutions to the communities where once they had contributed to the problems.

SQN: And where do you see the group going in the future?

D.B.: I see NMT reaching out into the community, providing mentors who have successfully overcome the negative to model positive change and offer guidance and hope to our youth. Our communities are suffering from a terrible disunity at the core; the result of racism, classism, social injustice, economic imbalance and the systematic destruction of hope. I believe NMT’s greatest value will be in collaboration

with groups such as the Healing Circle, partnering our efforts to provide forums for healing, growth and positive change. For any of our programs and efforts to have a lasting effect, we must learn to value each other and work together across all lines, to create a strong, unified, diverse community that fosters and sustains the well-being of all our children and all of our people.

SQN: Who/ How many people are in NMT?

D.B.: Who: Incarcerated men who, through word of mouth, have been intrigued to investigate NMT and been inspired to work with us. Outside: Various community volunteers from all walks of life. How many: NMT has maintained an average of 55 inside and 15 outside participants over the last four years.

SQN: If someone were interested in becoming a part of your group, how would they go about doing this?

D.B.: Those interested in joined NMT should speak to one of the Steering Committee members. We try to keep a balance of long-termers and short-termers (sentence), so that we know a good percentage of our members will be going home in the next few years to bring what they’ve learned from NMT into their communities.

SQN: What is the Healing Circle and how does it relate to your group?

D.B.: The Healing Circle for the Soul Support (HCSS) is a

group of individuals who have lost loved ones to murder; many of them have lost one or more children. The founders of the HCSS, and the chief sponsor, George Jurand, formed the group to provide culturally appropriate and sensitive support to communities of color who traditionally have not had their needs considered by existing services. The format and the methods are so effective that persons across all cultures participate and find solace in the HCSS.

NMT began collaborating with the HCSS in 2007, in a series of dialogs that examine all aspects of violence and its impact. Side by side “victim” and “offender” have found empathy and common ground. We have learned to cross the lines we imagine divide us to create a forum for support, healing and empowerment. From our initial collaboration we also developed additional workshops such as “Reconnecting the Community Through Communication,” where young incarcerated adults and community members rediscover the value in each other, and explore breaking down barriers and creating solutions in an effort to rewrite the community.

SQN: What do you expect out of a relationship between the two groups?

D.B.: NMT and HCSS are currently working to broaden the scope of our collaboration and develop a solid curriculum, to make this powerful forum available to other communities and venues.

SQN: What are some of the things you would like our readers to know?

D.B.: I would like your readers to know that every one of you is valuable and necessary. No matter what previous experience you have had, what wrong you have done (and we all have done wrong, sometime), you have talents and abilities that you can develop and use to make your life a good life, to help yourself, your family and your community.

SQN: Are others in training for Leadership positions?

D.B.: Yes, we have other co-facilitators that are connecting with the groups, each in his own, unique way: Marvin Mitchell, Marcus Williams, Eugene “MC” Montgomery and Michael Lewis.

SQN contacted NMT’s co-founder Jerry Elster for comment.

Jerry Elster: Our original intent at NMT was to expose perpetrators to victims, and victims to perpetrators. And in that way to put a face on crime. It’s a lot harder to commit crime when you put a face on the victim. Our goal is to make everybody accountable for public safety.

SQN: Could you comment on Denise Bannister’s role at NMT.

JE: She puts in a tireless effort to keep NMT together, no doubt. Denise is the glue that holds it all together. And I’d like to mention Lonnie (Morris), because NMT is his idea. Without Lonnie, there is no NMT. Everybody puts in a good effort to make this all happen, to all come together.

More on the Healing Circle next issue.

PROPOSITIONS 5 & 6

By **DAVID MARSH**

In an election that was quite clearly overshadowed by the uncertain economic times, Americans went to the polls and voted their pocket books in sending Propositions 5 and 6 down to decisive defeat.

Prop. 5, known as the Non-Violent Offenders Act, would have diverted drug and non-violent offenders into rehabilitation and diversion programs, making it much more difficult to incarcerate them. According to the Legislative Analyst’s Office, the initiative could have eventually cost the state over \$1 billion a year, off set by an additional \$1 billion a year in savings from reduced parole and prison costs.

Voters who participated in exit polls cited the certainty of the projected expenditures in deciding to reject the initiative.

Prop. 6, A Police and Law Enforcement Funding initiative, would have mandated an initial outlay of \$965,000,000 per year to fund police, sheriffs, district attorneys, adult probation and jails, an increase of several hundred million per year over current levels of spending. It proposed numerous changes in current laws related to membership in gangs, as well as sentencing changes. The measure was soundly defeated by voters.

‘Songbirds in a Golden Cage’



Red Frye & Jaimee Karroll tuning up to play

By **RONNIE COHEN**

Jaimee Karroll shares her tale of violence with a dozen of San Quentin's most violent

As a teenager and young adult, Jaimee Karroll sang. She played guitar and sang mostly dark folk songs until she realized that she used her voice to disassociate from herself, a coping technique she says she learned in the wake of a childhood kidnap and rape.

Karroll, now 53, quit singing more than 20 years ago. She put away her guitar and never picked it up again until last week, when she changed the strings and tuned it up to sing to a group of San Quentin State Prison convicts.

In her deep, melodic voice, Karroll explains that she had to quit singing to begin healing. "Why would I stop singing?" she asks, sitting on a floral futon next to her Labrador retriever and her cat in her El Cerrito home overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge. "In order to use my voice, I would lose awareness of myself. I fled myself in order to not be conscious of what happened. I wanted to become whole." So, after a psychiatric hospitalization, she

stopped singing completely. Not even in the shower. In the meantime, she underwent intensive psychotherapy and sought to regain and process repressed memories of the 1963 day when she was abducted and assaulted.

She joined Bay Area Women Against Rape, counseling other victims, and a few years ago began working inside San Quentin with men serving time for crimes like the one she says silenced her. Inside the prison overlooking San Francisco Bay in Marin County, Karroll began to forgive the three men she says abducted and assaulted her when she was 9-years old.

This weekend, the Marin-based Worldwide Forgiveness Alliance will give Karroll a Hero of Forgiveness award.

"Forgiveness was not achieved in a single moment but has unfolded over two decades," she says. First Karroll had to remember a crime she had long tried to forget. Though some have questioned the claims of people with repressed memories of crimes, Karroll's story has been heartfelt enough

to earn not only the forgiveness award but the trust of her colleagues working in the prison and the prisoners themselves.

At a recent dinner party with the leaders of the Insight Prison Project, a nonprofit program through which Karroll trained to run a weekly prison group, Rochelle Edwards invited Karroll to sing to her 11-year-old daughter. She sang "My Songbird," a 1977 ballad that Jesse Winchester wrote and Emmylou Harris made famous.

When he heard Karroll sing, Jacques Verduin, Insight Prison Project's executive director and founder, asked her to sing for his prison group. Karroll hesitated. But another event nudged Karroll to more openly confront her past and to overcome her hesitation. About a year ago, she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer.

To prepare for her first performance in two decades, Karroll reunited with her old

sort of attention commonly reserved for religious leaders and rock stars.

Karroll crosses and recrosses her legs as she addresses her rapt audience. She lost her long, brown hair to chemotherapy. Short, gray, curly hair frames her face.

The day after Thanksgiving, when she was 9-years old, she was walking about a block from her house. "I heard brakes screech and felt two hands grab me," she says. "I was immediately bound and attacked for approximately 10 hours."

Her assailants raped her repeatedly with the handle of a knife, she says. "If you can imagine being 9 and having the knife inside of you. It was terrifying."

"It was a day of complete violation. In that day, I totally lost myself. I broke in so many ways.

"I just couldn't tell my parents anything about what happened. Basically, I came home and went to war with my family."

The prisoners stare contemplatively and empathetically.

Karroll says that she married, became a singer and tried to bury her pain by drinking. "When I was a performer," she says, "I still didn't have a voice. In order to have a full experience of myself, I had to let go of that."

"Violence renders people silent."

She tells the men that they understand her in a deep way. "You really know what happened to me," she says. "I can't think of a better way to inter-

rupt the cycle of violence than to be right here in this prison. This work in the prison has helped me grasp the depths of humanity and the possibility of transformation."

Phillip Seiler, a well-groomed 47-year-old prisoner serving time for murder, thanks Karroll for telling her story. "What a brave little girl," he says.

Performing terrifies Karroll. But she feels compelled to share her story and her song with the criminals.

"It feels really profound to do it with you," she says, "to do it with men who've committed acts of violence and are committed to transcending that. It just feels important to tell you how I lost my voice as a result of that crime and to share it with you."

For more than five minutes, the men focus on Karroll while she tunes her guitar.

"All right," she says finally, beginning to strum, "don't expect much."

"It sounds good already," Seiler says, smiling tenderly.

Swaying back and forth, her legs still crossed, Karroll's harmonious voice fills the room as she sings "My Songbird."

*Songbird in a golden cage
She'd prefer the blue
How I crave the liquor of her song
Poor bird who has done no harm
What harm could she do
She shall be my prisoner her life long
My songbird wants her freedom
Now don't you think I know
But I can't find it in myself
To let my songbird go
I just can't let her go*

See **Songbirds**, Page 7

“Prison has helped me grasp the depths of humanity and the possibility of transformation.”

How to Persuade a Judge

By **STEPHEN LIEBB**

When faced with someone who sits in judgment over us, we need wisdom and skill to persuade that judge to rule in our favor. We all must appear before the “Judge of the whole earth” (Genesis 18:25). Antonin Scalia, an associate justice of the Supreme Court, has written a practical guide called, “Making Your Case: The Art of Persuading Judges.” Justice Scalia provides clear and concise principles to be an effective advocate.

An advocate’s character is important. Justice Scalia writes, “All of us are more apt to be persuaded by someone we admire than by someone we detest... Your objective in every argument, therefore, is to show yourself worthy of trust and affection. Trust is lost by dissembling or conveying false information not just intentionally but even carelessly; by mischaracterizing precedent to suit your case; by making arguments that could appeal only to the stupid or informed; by ig-

noring rather than confronting whatever weighs against your case. Trust is won by fairly presenting the facts of the case and honestly characterizing the issues; by owning up to those points that cut against you and addressing them forthrightly; and by showing respect for the intelligence of your audience.”

Justice Scalia states that judges can be persuaded only when three conditions are met: (1.) They must have a clear idea what you’re asking the court to do. (2.) They must be assured that it’s within the court’s power to do it. (3.) They must conclude that what you’re asking is best-both in your case and in cases that follow.

Among the principles that Justice Scalia presents for effective argumentation are:

- Your arguments must make logical sense. Always outline your brief.
- Know your audience.
- Know your case.
- Know your adversary’s case.

- Never overstate your case. Be scrupulously accurate.
- If possible lead with the strongest argument.
- Select the most easily defensible position that favors your case.
- Don’t try to defend the indefensible. Draw the sting out of unpleasant facts by presenting them yourself.
- Select your best argument and concentrate your fire. Justice Scalia quotes Quintilian, who said, “We must not always burden the judge with all the arguments we have discovered since by doing so we shall at once bore him and render him less inclined to believe us.”
- Communicate clearly and concisely. An advocate’s job is to present clearly the laws and the facts favoring your side of the case. It is not the judge’s job to piece the elements together from a wordy or confusing brief or argument. Scalia states that successful arguments are marked by brevity. Courts don’t want to hear you repeat

yourself. He advises advocates to compress their writing by eliminating sentences, phrases, and words that do not help.

- Appeal not just to rules but to justice and common sense.
- Reason is paramount with judges and overt appeal to their emotions is resented.
- Assume a posture of respectful intellectual equality with the judge. “An advocate should be instructive without being condescending, respectful without being obsequious and forceful without being obnoxious.”
- Restrain your emotions and don’t accuse.
- Close powerfully and say explicitly what you think the court should do.

Justice Scalia’s advice is a powerful tool to improve the art of communication. Communication is about trust and that is why honesty and fairness are important characteristics for a judge and for anyone who

wants to persuade a judge. When Moses was chosen to be an advocate for the Hebrews, before Pharaoh, he protested to God: “I am not a man of words...my speech is difficult and my tongue is difficult.” (Exodus 4:10) God responded: “Who gave man a mouth...Is it not I, God? Now go, and I will be your mouth.” (4:11-12).

Moses, a man who was not a “talker” became a powerful and effective advocate because of humility. He got out of the way of his arguments. Moses was an effective advocate because he was not in love with his own words and arguments. Moses did not let ego dilute or distort his message. He absorbed higher wisdom and became a channel to convey knowledge and truth greater than himself. These principles, when applied, can help us to become more effective advocates before those who judge us.



The President-Elect & VP Joe Biden

Obama

Continued from Page 1

She was there for the busses in Montgomery, the hoses in Birmingham, a bridge in Selma and a preacher from Atlanta who told people that we shall overcome. Yes we can," said Obama to an exuberant crowd.

John McCain watched the voter results from his campaign headquarters in Arizona, where he graciously conceded the election. "I wish Godspeed to the man who was my former opponent and will be my president," said McCain to a sympathetic crowd.

McCain's speech was the defining point which ended his decade long quest for the White House. He praised his supporters and his running mate, Sarah Palin, calling her, "one of the best campaigners I have ever seen, and an impressive new

voice in our party for reform." Pundits are crediting Obama's defeat of McCain to what is being called the best run political campaign in modern history. By early Wednesday morning Obama had an astonishing 338 electoral votes with McCain's tally at a diminutive 156, with Obama winning the popular vote by over 7 million.

Countries across the globe celebrated Obama's victory with Americans. In Kenya, his father's home country, President Mwai Kibaki proclaimed that Thursday would be a public holiday. Desmond Tutu of South Africa praised Obama's victory. The Iraqi foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari told the press that he thinks Obama "will not have the same enthusiasm and momentum for this situation," speaking of the on-going war in Iraq.

George W. Bush commented that Obama's win is "especially uplifting for a generation of Americans who witnessed the struggle for civil rights with their own eyes and four decades later see a dream fulfilled." He also invited the president-elect to visit the White House, while vowing to keep him informed during the transition of power.

"At this defining moment change has come to America..." Said Barack Obama, president-elect.

Condemned Row Inmates Form Advisory Council

By SAMUEL CAPERS

East Block's Condemned Row has been a world of its own. It's known to house the worst of the worst. It is a man's final stop before his ill-awaited fate is to be carried out. But many out on the mainline do not know that there are quite a few changes taking place here on the row. And, though there may be no hope for the condemned in the eyes of others, we see things a lot differently. We no longer sit under rocks and simply accept the fact that many of us may never see the streets again.

There were many issues that needed to be addressed within the East Block unit and absolutely no kind of communication when it came to staff and prisoners. This, of course, caused many difficulties and gaps that to this day remain, except for the reality that these issues are "fixable." With that said, the East Block Advisory Council came into play. The "EBAC" members

work along with the unit staff and administration on the row to make life easier and the program run smoother, for both staff and prisoners. It is a council of the condemned that have been here anywhere from upwards of many years to just a few. We are all working together to make this program more suitable and beneficial to all.

There are six "Grade A" yards here, and on each yard there are four EBAC representatives, one for each of the basic four ethnic groups, and one yard chairman who goes to the scheduled meetings with the staff. The issues brought up vary, such as: canteen, medical, property, and general unit issues that involved the condemned population as a whole. The staff needs to know that we are willing to work out issues with them on an advisory level, instead of using the Inmate Appeal Process (CDCR 602). Thru the EBAC reps speaking to their

constituents, we can now bring to the staff's attention issues that have an adverse effect on a certain group of prisoners, or a single person. On many occasions, the individual issue could turn into a population issue. By being able to address the staff using the EBAC process, we can now be at ease to know that most problems will be worked out on a timely basis and resolved.

Condemned Row has a history of not being able to function as others do out on the mainline. By working to resolve the problems on the row, we have now shown that not all inmates are program failures and many are willing to function like any other prisoner housed in the CDCR.

It's the EBAC's hope that the line we now have to the staff and administration can remain open so that programs can continue to run smoothly.

Condemned Row is now stepping out.

"He who opens a school door closes a prison." —Victor Marie Hugo (1802-1885)

Arts & Entertainment

Tips for Prison life

Here is a tip you may wish to pass on: The sodas that we get are not cold. So, all you need do is soak a sock in water, place the whole thing in front of the vent, and let evaporation do the rest.

By Fernando Caro

We all need to make a serious effort to re-establish an old and very effective program – the Post Card system. We had good results in the past. It allowed fast notes from home (2-3 days). A mailroom sergeant said they can process up to 20 post cards in the time it takes to do one envelope. That saves time for getting the mail out faster.

Post cards must have CDCR Number and your proper housing address in big bold letters. It worked very well before. It also saves 15 cents a letter, and a larger post card can hold a good size "letter" on both sides. If we'll all get on board, it works well.

By Douglas Clark

Think You Can Write? Contest Held for Writers

Resilience Multimedia, publisher of the widely praised book, "Think Outside the Cell: An Entrepreneur's Guide for the Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated," is sponsoring a writing contest for people who are or were in prison, and their loved ones. The best submissions will be included in books in Resilience's "Think Outside the Cell," series, which is intended to help the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated tackle hard challenges and have successful lives.

Contestants may share personal stories about one or more of these topics: reentering society after incarceration, waiting for loved ones to return home from prison, or prison marriages and relationships. Three winners will be chosen for each topic and will receive cash prizes: 1st Place \$300, 2nd Place \$150, 3rd Place \$75. Stories that do not win cash prizes will still be eligible for inclusion in the series. Writers whose stories are selected will receive a free copy of the book in which their work appears.

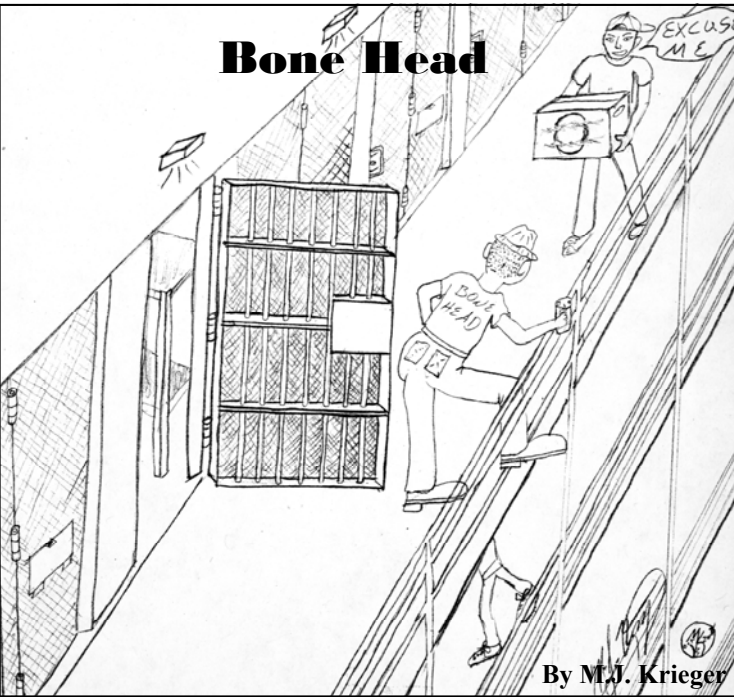
The Contest rules are as follows: All stories must be original and about situations or events that actually happened. You may submit stories on more than one topic. Stories

may be up to 3,000 words. Stories should be typewritten and double-spaced. Handwritten stories will be accepted as long as they are legible. Each page must include page number, your name, contact information and story title. Resilience Multimedia reserves the right to edit stories for clarity, punctuation, spelling and grammar. Story entries will not be returned. ALL ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED BY NOVEMBER 30, 2008. Winners and other selected stories will be announced on February 01, 2009 at www.thinkoutsidethecell.com and in a press release.

Emailed stories can be submitted to resiliencemultimedia@verizon.net. Stories submitted by mail can be sent to: Resilience Multimedia, 511 Avenue of the Americas Suite 525, New York NY 10011

LAST MONTH'S SUDOKU SOLUTION

7	1	9	8	2	4	5	3	6
2	3	4	7	6	5	8	9	1
6	8	5	9	3	1	4	7	2
5	7	8	2	1	6	3	4	9
9	6	3	4	7	8	2	1	5
4	2	1	3	5	9	7	6	8
3	9	2	6	8	7	1	5	4
8	5	6	1	4	3	9	2	7
1	4	7	5	9	2	6	8	3



SUDOKU

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Sudoku Puzzles by George Lowe

Religion

Chaplains Serving Hope on All Levels

By KENNETH R. BRYDON

Just as the U.S. military hires spiritual counselors, so does the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The makeup of San Quentin’s five chaplains is as diverse as the population: Catholic, Islamic, Jewish, Native American and Protestant. The Chaplains serve Condemned Row, Reception Center, North Block, and H-Unit, as well as the Hospital.

San Quentin Chaplains go through extensive theological training and education in their respective beliefs. Each Chaplain conducts religious services for those of their faith in areas appropriate for the prison security, and, when necessary, becomes the bearer of bad news for family tragedies to many who aren’t expecting to hear it.

Each chaplain brings a focus to their religious convictions, with the intention of providing a depth of understanding and ability to participate and practice in their chosen faith. Interviews with the five chaplains: Father Stephen Barber, Imam Rafeeq Hassan, Rabbi Carol Hyman, Hector Heredia and Pastor Morris Curry were quite revealing as to how each one approaches his or her responsibilities.



Father Stephen Barber

Father Stephen Barber started at San Quentin as a volunteer in 1996 along with other Jesuit priests from Berkeley where he attended the School of Theology and received his Master of Divinity degree. He entered the Jesuit Order in 1989, and was ordained a priest in 1998.

Upon being hired as a chaplain for San Quentin, former Warden Jeanie Woodford told him, “You are the priest and chaplain for San Quentin.” After being appointed to San Quentin by Archbishop Le-

vada, he was told the same thing by the Archbishop.

When asked what was the most difficult issue that he’s had to deal with, Father Barber pointed to seeing his parishioners in blue who had passed on. He pointed to the death of Ricky Earl, a three-strike Lifer. Ricky had grown to embrace the Catholic faith, and many saw in him a caring and sincere individual. Father Barber visited Ricky in the prison hospice program at California Medical Facility before his death.

In serving the San Quentin community, Father Barber says he seeks to be of help wherever he can. He recognizes the diverse ethnic and age group here that represents California as a whole. One of the great joys he receives in this job is seeing people enhance their own dignity and humanity, and grow in their walk with God.

Looking into the future, Father Barber wants to be around to see the Condemned Row population housed in the new building being constructed. He continues to work on his Spanish to better serve the Hispanic population. He hopes to be an example to all who have become a part of the priesthood.



Chaplain Hector Heredia

At age 57, the Native American Indian (AMI) chaplain, Hector Heredia has been involved in Indian Spiritual affairs for 40 years. He was brought up in the teachings by two Shaman, Charlie Kills Enemy and Shelby White Bear, and introduced into

the “Fire Place,” Inner Circle to be trained in the traditional Indian Way.

Hector was taught the prophecies of the “Red Road,” that were Native practices to gather the people back. The Shamans of all tribes had come together in one accord saying that there should be one tribe. At the heart of the practice is the “Sweat Lodge Ceremony,” a purification ritual. The Native American population of San Quentin includes the 52 Native Americans on Condemned Row.

Coming to San Quentin in 1995 to rebuild the lodge, Heredia came as a “Sun Dancer,” participating in a four-day dancing ceremony (without water and food). Welcomed back by the previous AMI Chaplain, Lee Palanoc, he became a regular at



Imam Rafeeq S. Hassan

Muslim Chaplain, Imam Rafeeq S. Hassan began volunteering at San Quentin State Prison in 1985 under the endorsement and sponsorship of Masjid Waritheen of Oakland, CA. Imam Hassan officially became the Muslim Chaplain at San Quentin in 1986. Imam John Faqir had been the Chaplain at San Quentin for 10 years prior to Imam Hassan becoming the Chaplain for the Muslim Community at San Quentin. Imam Hassan is a student of Imam W.D. Mohammad.

Prior to his arrival here at San Quentin, Imam Hassan, came from Detroit, Michigan, where he worked as a fashion coordinator for the fa-



Rabbi Carol Hyman

In November 2004 Carol Hyman came to San Quentin part time as the Jewish Chaplain. She brings a background of institutional experience to her work. First at Napa Hospital, and then California Medical Facility and Solano. She now has a Master of Divinity from Graduate Theology University in Berkeley, and continues work on her Doctorate in Ministry. When asked why her interests had taken her in this direction, she spoke of an intense desire to see people change in life’s path.

“Teshuvah” is the Hebrew word, for the process of repentance. Rabbi Hyman

mous singing group “The Temptations.”

As part of his religious training he received an Islamic scholarship from the Islamic Society of North America (“ISNA”), in Indianapolis, Indiana. His studies included the following subjects: Fiqh Al Sunnah, Fiqh Al Hadith, and Fiqh Al Qur’an.

Imam Hassan facilitates Jumuah, Ta’leem, and Islamic study programs for the Mainline, Condemned Row, and Reception Center prisoners. He also finds time to facilitate various self-help programs which include, No More Tears, San Quentin Trust, and Milatti Islami (12-Step).

Imam Hassan anticipates sponsoring a Halal program in the near future that will allow prisoners to meet their religious dietary requirements. Imam Hassan constantly encourages Muslims and other incarcerated men to try and fulfill their obligations as fathers and for becoming productive members of society.

His 23 years of service here at San Quentin has allowed Imam Hassan the opportunity to work with and assist men of all faiths.

says, “I seek a balance of being honest about the past in a factual way, while living under the circumstance in which prisoners find themselves.” She recognizes that many who come to her are facing very difficult issues, and many have sunk into deep despair. Her focus is in helping them to find a balance without trying to justify mistakes made.

Rabbi Hyman’s goals for the future are to improve the San Quentin image of being a place where redemption can and does take place. She sees her duties as a chaplain and a rabbi as being over a single congregation rather than each being isolated from the others. “They have a sense of being part of a larger whole,” she says. Whether it’s Condemned Row, Reception Center, or the Mainline, she intends that each one see themselves included.

“This is my vocation,” Rabbi Hyman says, “and I’m in the right place.”

The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the hearts.
Proverbs 17:3



Pastor Morris Curry

In the early 1990s, Pastor Morris Curry began teaching “Biblical Counseling Foundation” (BCF) as a volunteer. Recommended by then Protestant Chaplain Earl Smith, who saw a group of Lifers eager to learn.

With an interest in Prison Ministry inspired from his congregation, Pastor Curry began teaching the program to Lifers who passed on their understanding to short-term prisoners being released. These first students went on to eventually teach the program themselves.

Pastor Curry’s interest in prisoners continued to grow over the years. He continued teaching BCF along with bringing his church congregation into San Quentin. In March of 2006, he was at the prison to renew his volunteer status when he discovered that Chaplain Earl Smith had retired. His friend and fellow BCF teacher, Dave Haggy, pressed him to apply for the position. In September, 2006, Pastor Curry was the new chaplain.

He brings to San Quentin 22 years of service, and he set about to make the incarcerated church no different than the outside congregation. “Everything is done decently and in order,” he said. Moving forward, he is developing ties with churches who are interested in meeting the needs of those about to parole. A major project is the “Meet Me at The Gate” program.

He sees himself as pastor for all of San Quentin, he has a vision of the many Lifers leaving prison and going on to be of service in their communities. Pastor Curry ran for mayor of a city in Napa County, but lost to the incumbent.

Forgiving

By DOC CHILDRE and HOWARD MARTIN

The incoherence that results from holding on to resentments and unforgiving attitudes keeps you from being aligned with your true self. It can block you from your next level of quality life experience. Metaphorically, it's the curtain standing between the room you're living in now and a new room, much larger and full of beautiful objects. The act of forgiveness removes the curtain. Clearing up your old accounts can free up so much energy that you jump right into a whole new house. Forgiving releases you from the punishment of a self-made prison where you are both the inmate and the jailer.

Testigos de Jehova

Las Reuniones en espanol para los Testigos de Jehova, son cada Segundo Sabado y cada cuarto Sabado del mes.

El horario para dichas reuniones es de 12:00 P.M. del medio dia alas 2:30 p.m.

Lugar de reunion es dentro de la Liberia de la Iglesia Protestante.

Opinion

In America Slaves
Have No
Voting Rights

By LAMONTA McBROOM

Participation in the electoral process has always been important for many reasons, but more so now. November 4, a black president was elected and we are being thrust into a historical event, but none of this would be significant without the right to vote.

Have you ever wondered why in Saddam Hussein's Iraq prisoners are allowed to vote whereas in the majority of the states of this Union prisoners have no voting rights, even those on parole?

Some would cry, Saddam's voting rights are a meaningless ploy, a ruse, a hoax. I say, whatever you call it, they got to vote; what's your excuse America?

To deprive individuals of the right to vote is to silence them, to prevent them from obtaining representation, and to keep them in a status that is less than human.

We think slavery ended somewhere in the 1800s, but the truth is slavery never ended in the United States of America.

We all know, during America's slavery period, justification for maintaining slavery is based upon social economics that elevates some to think they

are superior to others. That never changed. Prisoners are commodities and an economic factor where the penal system becomes a corporate fact.

The United States Constitution, 13th Amendment § 1 says; "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

As you can see, there is an exception where slavery is permitted even today. The 13th Amendment removes slave ownership from the private citizen and places it exclusively in government hands.

In other words, when you become a prisoner you are also a slave. While you are on parole, technically, you are still a prisoner but are housed at your own home, at your own expense and still pay taxes, still slaves. Less than human, because parolees have no right to vote.

The mock election conducted at San Quentin reminds me of my slave status, the importance of the right to vote and the reasons for which prisoners are treated as less than human, but also a commodity.

The Son of My Strength

By E.P.KIE

Somehow this year has managed to slip by, one day at a time. Birthdays & many other special days. Some that hurt more than most. Father's day is a biggie for me, not one single word mutually shared this year. It's not like we didn't think of each other on that special day, In years past we sent letters and words to each other.

Some good, and some not so good. But letters and words - none the less. My son, is my son - the son of my youth and my strength. Number two he was born in the family. Baseball & catch - fishing & camping - building that all-important fort! Times of imagination in an attic over the garage. Trips to airports and visits to space ports. Satellite's made in our shop And opened together upon their return to earth.

Building model airplanes & crashes of those that didn't fly all that well :) Bird feeders & rabbit cages - fixing cars, trips to see fishes in a huge tank - Disneyland and birthdays

some of my memories we did share. Sweden that land way up north that hangs like a cluster of grapes. To the north of Europe beckoned the soul of the son of my strength. Will he be able to remain strong and continue his fight? To the head of the stream? Or will he succumb to the lack of language, Dollars or fear of the unknown or the yet untried?

I have seen his sheer tenacity in the land down under years past. I've witnessed his ability to hang in there in a foreign land. It's this dad's observation that the son of my strength will succeed in the putting of his hand to the plow. You're in my prayers my son, stay the course, keep your vision, it's your time to till the ground.

Make every step count and remember to keep your focus on the goal not on the past. This - the story of the son of my strength, 'tis truth that I now have brought to light - take wings my son of my strength & FLY !

San Quentin.....
Yesterday and Today

.....a biographical, historical and introspective look
at our world behind the walls, the way it is, as well as the way it was.

By DAVID MARSH

The newly formed Legislature of the fledgling state of California authorized the state's first prison in 1852, and the merchant ship, Waban, was purchased by the state for the princely sum of \$850. Anchored in the waters off Point Quentin, the 13-year-old wooden vessel was outfitted and remodeled to imprison up to 40 inmates in its dark, dank hold. Within months the state was to encounter its first prison overcrowding as the nightly total of inmates chained in the Waban's hold regularly exceeded 60 men. Four men at a time typically occupied each of the Waban's tiny 8'x 8' cells.

San Quentin today sprawls over 432 acres of prime real estate at Point Quentin on the shores of San Francisco Bay. The average daily population of approximately 5,250 inmates is housed in a variety of accommodations from cells to dormitories. California's Condemned Row, as well as its execution chamber, are located behind the walls at San Quentin. With an annual operating budget in excess of \$ 210 million, it is the world's most expensive prison to operate.

By January of 1853, 150 cons were packed in deplorable conditions on the tiny Waban, and the state's first prison expansion project was undertaken. The Legislature authorized the purchase for \$10,000 of 20 bay-side acres near Mission San Rafael. An additional \$135,000 was set aside to build a new prison designed to hold 250 inmates. Inmate labor was to be used during the construction process. Also in 1853, the first warden's residence, also utilizing inmate labor, was completed at a cost of \$14,453.75.

State prison expansion pro-

jects are alive and booming in our state as Gov. Schwarzenegger signed a 2007 bill providing \$7.9 billion to add one prison and 53,000 additional beds to the system which currently consists of 34 prisons housing approximately 153,000 male and female inmates.

By 1854, the newly constructed prison, christened Corte Madera Prison, already exceeded its designed capacity of 250 inmates. They were housed in 48 small 10'x6' cells and one long room on the prison's bottom floor that was designed for overflow inmates. An original cell description described them as "8' to 9' feet high in the center with an arched ceiling, tapering to a height of 5' at the sides. A solid iron door featured a small slit in the center to allow the cell's occupants their only chance to gulp fresh air or peek thru to the world outside their tiny cell." The Waban, which had by now been towed to Marin Island in the Bay, was still used to hold the worst of the convicts, as was the island itself.

In the early days of the state's new prison system, the average con was a 25-year-old serving about a two-year stretch behind the walls.

Today's inmate population is aging noticeably, and the recent "tough on crime" era has resulted in legislated sentencing enhancements that have significantly lengthened the average inmate's stay behind bars. Excluding the inmates housed on Condemned Row, the average con at San Quentin is much older, an average of 37 years old, and serving a term that is considerably longer in duration than at any time in the state's history, approximately 48 months.

December 27, 1854 witnessed the prison system's first major prison break when 22 cons stole a boat and fled from Marin Island. A number of the fleeing inmates were killed in the running gun battle which ensued.

Records reflect that the new Corte Madera Prison was a co-ed facility, with the women, of course, housed separately from the male inmates. In 1855, amid allegations of drunken guards, well-heeled inmates enjoying daily excursions outside the prison grounds, and charges of cohabitation between guards and female inmates, the state stepped in and took back operation of the prison from its contractor/operator.

The accepted practice of allowing inmate trustees to venture off the grounds to enjoy cocktails in nearby San Rafael was curtailed under the state's tutelage, much to the trustee's chagrin.

In 1858, over 500 inmates were crowded into the state's only prison. Recognizing a need to get a handle on the overcrowding problem, the state agreed to construct a new prison in the small town of Folsom. Actual construction at Folsom was not to begin until 20 more years had passed.

DOES THIS SITUATION SOUND FAMILIAR?

In the next issue: a mass prison break of 200 inmates, the advent of striped uniforms, construction of the new prison at Folsom, and a closer look at the daily routine of a San Quentin inmate.

Also, in 1860, the first JOINT VENTURE program utilizing private contractors and inmate labor comes to San Quentin.

Songbirds

Continued from Page 4

When she finishes, Robert Frye, 38, who has spent 20 years incarcerated, asks, "How did that feel?"

"I was a little bit nervous," Karroll responds. "I could hear it in my voice."

"Why did you like that song?" Seiler asks.

"I was drawn to that song because I was in a cage," Karroll says. "But how does it feel to you guys to be in a cage?"

"It's different for you," says an inmate who requests anonymity. "You're innocent. How long were you in a cage?"

"A lifetime," Karroll says.

"Jaimee," says Pat Mims, 46, who has spent 20 years in

prison for second-degree murder, "I've known you for about one-and-a-half years now, and I've never known your story. I live a life of restitution. I never know if my restitution is being paid out to Kevin's family. When you come in and share your story and play your music, it makes everything I'm doing worth it. It's beautiful. Thank you."

The prisoner who requested anonymity holds the microphone for Karroll while she plays a Leonard Cohen song.

When she finishes, Manuel Nieto, 47, who has been behind bars for 24 years for a drunken-driving homicide, says, "I'm very touched by your story. Do you have any nightmares?"

The two talk about their nightmares.

"I think lives are turned in the midst of these acts," Kar-

roll says. "My life was turned in one direction, and the men who hurt me, their lives were turned in another direction."

"What happened to those people who were so awful to you?" the inmate who held the microphone asks.

"I don't know," Karroll answers.

"You never went to [the] police? So you let them have a free slate?"

Karroll fires back, "It's not free."

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If we practice an
eye for an eye and a
tooth for a tooth, soon
the whole world will be
blind and toothless.

—Mahatma Gandhi

Parolee Arrested in Carjacking

By ALY TAMBOURA

A man recently paroled from San Quentin is accused of stealing a truck and crashing it into another car, killing one woman and injuring two others, while being chased by the Richmond police, say officials.

The suspect, Jordan Taitano, took police on a high speed chase which ended on San Pablo Dam Road in El Sabrante where the crash occurred. The truck, which Taitano was driving, smashed into a Mercedes, hurtling it into several parked cars.

The rear seat passenger in the Mercedes, a 57-year-old

woman, was killed from the impact of the crash. The driver and front seat passenger were both seriously injured.

A woman who tried to get away from the suspect before the chase started was also seriously injured, said the police.

Taitano is accused of robbing a husband and wife at a local inn where the couple was staying. Police said the husband fought with the suspect while his wife escaped by jumping through a closed window. The woman suffered significant injuries from the escape.

Police said the suspect left the scene of the robbery on foot

and carjacked a passing motorist. The Richmond police recognized the carjacked vehicle minutes later and gave chase. The chase began at relatively low speeds but eventually progressed to very high speeds prior to the crash.

Taitano fled the site of the accident and was apprehended shortly afterward. He was booked into the Contra Costa County Jail on suspicion of vehicular homicide, carjacking and robbery, said authorities.

Taitano was paroled from San Quentin one week before the incident, according to authorities.

State High Court: Governor Erred in Parole Denial

Behavior in prison wasn't considered

By PAUL ELIAS
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO – A divided state Supreme Court has ruled Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger was wrong to deny parole to a murderer who was a model prisoner during the more than 23 years she served behind bars.

In a 4-3 decision, California's high court said the governor must consider more than just the nature of the crime when he overturns Board of Parole Hearings' decisions granting parole. The majority decision, written by Chief Justice Ronald George, said the governor must show "some evidence" the parolee is a danger to public safety.

Lawrence volunteered for many prison organizations and earned a master's degree in business administration.

Still, Schwarzenegger reversed the panel's decision as he had done previously, finding the killing to be particularly egregious. Lawrence shot and stabbed Rubye Williams to death in 1971 and then spent 11 years as a fugitive before turning herself in to police accompanied by the late Los Angeles attorney Johnnie Cochran.

Schwarzenegger said in his 2006 veto that Lawrence's crime was "a cold, premeditated murder carried out in an especially cruel manner and committed for an incredibly petty reason."

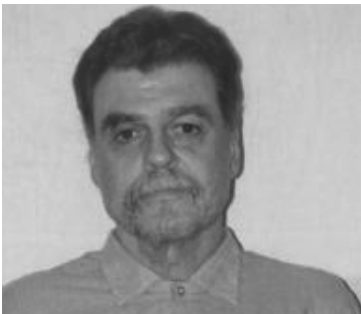
Condemned Inmate Found Dead

By GARY KLIEN

A condemned inmate at San Quentin State Prison was found dead in his cell Thursday in an apparent suicide, authorities said.

Edward Dean Bridges, 55, had been on death row since 1992, when he was sentenced for a kidnapping and murder in Riverside County. Bridges was found unconscious in his cell early Thursday morning in an apparent hanging, said Darrell Harris, a Marin County coroner's investigator.

"Our pathologist didn't have anything to indicate it was anything other than self-



Edward Dean Bridges
Photo provided by California Department of Corrections

asphyxiation by suicide," Harris said.

Bridges was housed in a cell by himself. He left no suicide message and had no

history of suicidal behavior, Harris said.

Since California reinstated capital punishment in 1978, 41 condemned inmates have died of natural causes, 15 committed suicide, 13 were executed in California, one was executed in Missouri and five died of other causes, according to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

There are now 677 inmates on California's death row, said Terry Thornton, spokeswoman for the CDCR.

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We Want to Hear From You!

The San Quentin News welcomes and encourages inmates, free staff, custody staff, volunteers and people and entities outside of the institution to submit articles for this publication.

Please use the following criteria when submitting:

- Please limit your submitted articles to no more than 350 words.
- Articles will be edited for con-

tent and length.

- The newspaper is not a medium to file grievances, use the prison appeals process. However, we do encourage submitting stories and/or articles which are news worthy and encompass issues that will have an impact on the prison populace.
- Please do not use offensive language in your submissions.

- Art work is welcomed (i.e. poems, songs, cartoons, drawings, and photos).
- Letters to the editor should be short and to the point.
- Submissions need to be copies that don't require to be returned.

Send Submissions to:
Education Dept. / SQ News
San Quentin, CA 94964

Remembering Matthew Solomon

Matthew Solomon, a former student in the San Quentin College Program, was shot and killed in San Francisco on Thursday, September 4 while standing on the street, talking to his friend Noel Espinoza, who was also killed. Matthew was 23 years old. He was an extraordinarily kind and creative person who had been building a life and working hard to support his two small children. Articles about his death (and the overwhelming number of shootings that have occurred in San Francisco) appeared in the SF Chronicle and in the Goodwill Industries newsletter, where he worked and had recently received a promotion. Those who knew him will always remember his sweet smile and his stunningly brilliant spoken word poetry.

In case any one would like to send a donation, Goodwill has established a designated



account at Wells Fargo to help defray burial costs and provide support for the children:

Matthew Fund
c/o Goodwill Industries
1500 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
Attention: Vince DeVictor

By Prison University Project

Printed by
san Quentin Print Shop

San Quentin News USPS 4870-700

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San Quentin News

THE PULSE OF SAN-QUENTIN

VOL. 2008 NO. 5

DECEMBER 10, 2008

SAN QUENTIN, CALIFORNIA 94964

POPULATION: 5,435

Prisoners Give Back To the Community



Community Development Associations receiving checks from prisoners and Joint Venture

By **MICHAEL R. HARRIS**
Managing Editor &
KENNETH R. BRYDON
Editor in Chief

More than \$35,000 from San Quentin prisoners' salaries has been donated to three Marin County charitable organizations at a ceremony on Nov. 6, 2008. Prisoners

working with Joint Venture gave 20 percent of their earnings to this purpose; a program working to benefit several very different causes.

As a result of 1991 legislation allowing private businesses to come into the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), Labcon has been

employing San Quentin prisoners for over 17 years.

Workers are paid minimum wage by these for-profit businesses and, after 20 percent is taken for Victim Restitution compensation, and another 20 percent for room and board, the remaining 60 percent is for the prisoners' use.

See **Giving Back** Page 2

Appeals Court Upholds Death Penalty Delay

By **ALY TAMBOURA**

The 1st District Court of Appeal refused to overturn a Marin County judge's ruling resulting in additional delays of executions at San Quentin State Prison.

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation completed construction on a new execution chamber at San Quentin, prompting a Marin County court to find that the governor and prison officials failed to open up public hearings to California's changes in the methods used to administer the death penalty, in violation of state procedures.

The current execution procedure is part of a lawsuit filed by condemned inmates, who maintain that the method is inhumane under the U.S. Constitution that forbids cruel and unusual punishment. The case was ruled on by U.S. District Judge Jeremy Fogel in 2006, when he described the state's execution method as "broken." In the ruling Judge Fogel made recommendations to the state to improve the execution standard while addressing the concerns of the humane termination of condemned prisoners. The state in response implemented a plan to improve training and supervision of execution officers and

the construction of a new execution chamber. The construction project, which critics say was completed in secret, is the catalyst for the Marin County judge's ruling.

Earlier this year the U.S. Supreme Court heard a similar case from Kentucky in which the constitutionality of lethal injections was challenged. The Supreme Court's ruling upheld lethal injection as a "legal method of execution." The ruling will no doubt have an impact on the California lawsuit, according to legal professionals.

The state has the right to appeal the recent ruling, further exacerbating the delays in a solution to the execution concerns. In addition, the state will likely have to open the execution methods up to public scrutiny, taking months if not years to complete, say attorneys for death row inmates. The result of all of the legal wrangling will further delay executions in California where more than 670 prisoners wait for an outcome. The already three-year delay has kept some men alive who have exhausted all their options in the appeals process.

See **Death Penalty** Page 6



Court Ruling Expected On Overcrowding

By **DAVID MARSH**

Testimony has concluded in a landmark federal court case where a three-judge panel will decide if chronic overcrowding in California's overwhelmed prisons is the cause of constitutionally poor levels of medical and mental health care.

If the panel of three federal court judges rule against the state, another trial will convene early next year to determine remedies. Attorneys for prisoners in the class action lawsuit want the court to reduce the inmate population in the state's 33 prisons to no more than 104,000 prisoners. Their plan would require the early release of 52,000 prisoners over a two-

year period into treatment centers, county jails or on parole.

In order to prevail in the case, the plaintiffs (inmates and their attorneys) must prove that overcrowding is the leading cause of the substandard medical and mental health care. There is no indication of how soon a decision in the case will be handed down.

The civil rights case opened Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2008 in a San Francisco courtroom and quickly

Warden Ayers Says Farewell To San Quentin

By **KAMAL SEFELDEEN**

After a long career in the U.S. military and 41 years in California corrections, Robert L. Ayers, Jr., 61, is leaving his command post as the 33rd warden of San Quentin State Prison.



Warden Ayers (left) with former prisoner Willie Rahman Green

When Ayers became the warden, many inmates and staff had mixed expectations. His critics would point to his Pelican Bay era while acting warden, but his supporters pointed to his heroism in rescuing an elderly fisherman, which earned Ayers a Medal of Valor.

Slowly, assurance and enthusiasm replaced the skepticism. Inmates and staff came to find him approachable and his administration has marked an era of encouragement to grow. Good ideas grew as micromanagement diminished, vague rules gave way to sensible and workable practice. Volunteers found a listener in the warden. Programs arose that were never heard of in San Quentin, like the Inmate Film Program endowed by the Discovery Channel, Victim Offenders and Stand-Up.

The warden is a striking figure as he walks unescorted around the prison, dapper in a Panama hat, civilian coat and tie.

As one of the lifer inmates puts it, "When you approach the warden with a question, he would shake your hand and look you in the eyes and give you full attention."

"Even to the last days in office, he defies the term 'Lame Duck,' and gives full attention to the establishment of the San Quentin Museum. I shall miss him," says Don DeNeve, who has been authorized to write the history of San Quentin.

"If there was a Hall of Fame for wardens, Robert L. Ayers, Jr. would be inducted on the first go-around. His overall knowledge and experience in managing prison operations is astounding. Staff that have had the opportunity to work side-by-side with him have benefited greatly. As a leader, he instills pride, integrity and has a great sense of vision," says John Curzon, associate warden.

See **Warden Ayers** Page 8



The SQ gymnasium overflowing with prisoners

took shape as a battle between prison and health care experts testifying for both sides. The state adamantly denies that the overcrowding itself is the primary cause of the poor level of care.

See **Court Ruling** Page 3

California Lifer Is Going Home

One Man's Journey to Freedom Through the California Prison System

By ALY TAMBOURA

After serving 27 years, 4 months in prison for a first-degree murder conviction, Ali Pertsoni has been released from San Quentin State Prison to return to his native country of Kosovo.

Before being granted parole, Pertsoni went before the Board of Prison Hearings (BPH) 11 times in as many years. Rejected the first nine times, Pertsoni was found suitable by the board in 2006, only to have the governor's office overrule the board's decision, denying him his freedom.

"At my second parole hearing one of the board members told me that I would probably die in prison," said Pertsoni. "I heard the mean words of the prison official ringing in my ears when I suffered a heart attack in 2005."

After his heart attack, and the 2006 parole denial, Pertsoni spent the following two years appealing the governor's ruling in federal court. Ultimately it was the BPH, re-evaluating his case in an en banc hearing, that resulted in a unanimous decision, which granted his parole. Furthermore, the governor's

office refused to review his case a second time, thus securing his release.

After many hugs, his eyes full of tears of joy, Pertsoni departed SQSP Nov. 24, es-

Born in Kosovo in 1954, Pertsoni lived a simple life on his family farm. In his adolescence he became involved in a humans rights movement which held demonstrations against the repressive Communist government. His activism against the government led to him being a wanted man. Believing his life was in danger, Pertsoni fled to Austria, staying in a refugee camp until 1975 when he received political asylum in the United States.

"I love my home country. I didn't come here (America) for a better life, I came here to save my life," said Pertsoni.

In the United States Pertsoni met and married his wife of 33 years, Yuri Pertsoni, who has been beside him during his 27 years of incarceration. The Pertsonis' have

been a fixture in the SQ visiting room for almost a decade. It is in the visiting room that all who know Pertsoni witnessed his love for life. Always with a smile, quick witted Pertsoni embraced us and our families with a caring heart that will not be forgotten.

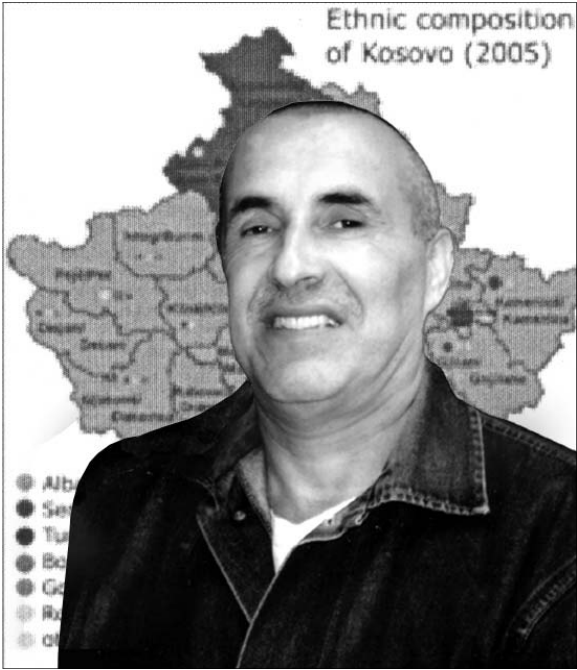
"I have watched so much happen in the visiting room. I've seen marriages, divorces

and watched many children grow up right here in this room," said Pertsoni.

When asked how he felt about being paroled, Pertsoni lights up. "It is my faith in Allah, my wife and my focus in doing the right thing that has kept me going all of these years. Some prisoners get rejected by the BPH and give up; instead of staying on track they use drugs and get caught up in prison politics and violence. Not me; I never gave up. I learned a trade (vocational dry cleaning), I didn't use drugs, and I stayed away from trouble. It was a sacrifice sometimes to do the right thing, but I knew in my heart that this day would come."

Pertsoni gives a lot of credit to the self-help and community-based programs at SQ for aiding him in his successful bid for parole. He attended and completed classes that include: Trust Fellows, Mankind, New Leaf, Victim Offender Education Group, Coaching Process, Attitudinal Healing and many others in his stay at SQ.

"There are so many volunteers and staff members that I want to thank, so many that didn't give up on me and the other men here at San Quentin. Thank you, thank you, thank you," said Pertsoni in his farewell.



Recently released Ali Pertsoni in front of a map of his home country Kosovo

corted by immigration officers. He will spend a short time in an immigration holding facility until the long airline flight to his family home in Gjakova, Kosovo, a nation which earlier this year gained its independence from Serbia.

"I am a free man, returning to a free Kosovo after 35 years. I am really going home," said Pertsoni.

Giving Back

Continued from Page 1

Once these amounts are withdrawn, 20 percent more of each check earned must go into a savings account that the inmates receive, and, if there are family members to support, another 20 percent must be sent directly to care for their needs.

The remaining 20 percent still exceeds the possible earnings from any other prison job. Each year, the San Quentin warden decides which Victim's Services program will receive the funds, and Warden Robert Ayers, Jr. selected this year's recipients to be three Bay Area programs: Marin Abused Women's Services (\$10,851), Bay Area Women Against Rape (\$10,851), and Sunny Hills Services (\$14,468).

Marin Abused Women's Services and Bay Area Women Against Rape focus on violence against women while Sunny Hills Services provides protection and assistance to abused children.

The San Quentin Labcon does assembly work, packaging over a million disposable pipet tips a week that are used in laborato-



Labcon employee's posing with donated checks

ries all over the nation. Employing 30 men in blue, the business is headquartered in Texas and owned by Tipton Golias, says Glenn Alexander, who supervises the work crew.

Representing Labcon at the event was Jim Happ, president of the company. Happ finds the arrangement with CDCR and San Quentin very good. Alexander says that the workers average \$400 every two weeks. Prisoner Robert Lott uses some of the money to pay for his wife's visits from Alaska.

As opposed to the customary \$200 "Gate Money," having an account waiting with a sizable sum of money provides a sense of accomplishment walking out the door. Many who parole with minimum resources find themselves returning to the "fast money" of crime. Building a good work ethic and having enough money for living ex-

penses until work is found improves a parolee's chance of a successful parole.

"You get used to punching a clock," said Lott, talking about how it helps to improve a person's worth ethic. "It's a product that you have to get out on a schedule." The San Quentin Labcon employees feel that their contributions make a real difference to those their donation will help, and the money earned will help them start a new life.

At the presentation were representatives from all three recipients. As the checks were handed over, each Victims Services' representative expressed their great appreciation for the hard work of the men. They said that, in this time of tight budgets, these large amounts will help them to continue their vital services. They shook hands with the many employed prisoners, thanking them again.

Health and Wellness Corner

We would like to announce the first ever "Health and Wellness Corner" column here at San Quentin News. Each month, a University of California, San Francisco health professional student will answer questions that you submit about health issues. Inquiries will be answered in the next month's paper. Feel free to ask us questions about any medical concern that you have, and it may be answered so that everyone can benefit. If you have a question, put it in a U-Save-Em envelope addressed to: "Health and Wellness Corner," UCSF Doctors (Dr. Shira Shavit) – Medical Box. If you include your name and number, they will be kept confidential. Note that this column is for general medical questions. Here are two examples of questions that we would be able to answer in the column:

- I have Hepatitis C and was wondering, can I pass it to my partner when I get out?

- Does the flu shot really cause the flu?

If you do not feel well or have an URGENT medical concern, fill out a 7362 request for services form to see your housing unit medical staff.

Visiting Rooms Upgrade To Digital Photos

By KENNETH BRYDON

Film for Polaroid cameras has become a thing of the past, and the San Quentin visiting room is now using digital cameras and color photo printers.

The digital age has delivered crisper images and larger photos. "It takes a little longer," says visiting room Officer P. McNabb, "but is worth the wait."

The Men's Advisory Council worked with the San Quentin administration to bring about the new system.

All three visiting room areas are equipped with their own cameras and printers. The digital cameras arrived in the visiting room in November. Other than a change in cameras, everything else remains the same; photo ducats are still purchased through the prison canteen for the same price.

McNabb explained that two pictures are taken and then the cameraman offers a choice of which one to print. The camera is brought over to

the small color printer at intervals, and in approximately 20 minutes the photos are delivered. McNabb also said that since the arrival of the new camera the number of photos being printed has doubled in the North Block visiting room.

Condemned Row Visiting Officer M. Bock says that taking photos for the condemned has greatly improved. Aiming the digital camera through the access port of the visiting enclosures is very easy with the camera's large viewing screen.

Photos have the option of being printed with the date on them. Future developments being worked on are finding a way to allow visitors to pay for the photos and, when requested, the placement of the digital photos on the internet. Visiting Room Lt. K. Evans said that most other prisons in CDCR have yet to change over to the digital format and continue to use Polaroid film. So far, everyone interviewed about the new system gave high praise for the quality of the photographs.

1940: Clinton T. Duffy Orders San Quentin Reforms (Part 2 of a 3-part series)

On Monday morning, July 15th, at 6:30 a.m., Clinton-Duffy entered the office for his first day as warden. By 9 a.m. he had fired six guards and banned the use of loaded canes, whips, straps, rubber hoses and other forms of corporal punishment.

He then directed the inmate painting crew to obliterate the nine-inch circles on cell block floors where prisoners were forced to stand for hours at a stretch without moving or talking.

In the same order, he abolished the head shaving of new arrivals since he felt that entering a prison was humiliation enough; he refused to perpetrate the added indignity of a medieval practice inherited from early California Spanish days. In addition, the stenciling of large black numbers on the backs of convicts' clothing was eliminated.

The orders issued by the acting warden during the first hours of his new administration were a shock to the older guards, especially those who remembered Clinton as Officer Bill Duffy's mischievous kid running around the residential areas. Gossip, rumors and comments of "meddling amateur, he's issuing orders right and left" and "he'll get his ears pinned back soon enough" filtered through the prison that morning. Just before

noon, five guards stomped into the warden's office and resigned. "You're turning San Quentin into a playground," one of them said, "and we don't want to stick around for the riots that are coming."

Duffy rose from his chair behind the large desk and said simply, "I'm much more interested in the reactions of men who cannot march into this office to speak their piece." With that he walked out and across the small parking lot into the old three-story parapet structure which served as the control point for the "inside." Duffy told the half-dozen officers assembled there that he was going into the big yard alone.

To the horror of the tower officers, Duffy crossed the gardens and past the battered Spanish cell block and hospital and strolled into the large, uncovered concrete yard. Years later, in his 1950 autobiography, Duffy wrote,

Thousands of men swarmed over the stone flats, shifting and turning to loosen the press of bodies, men doing nothing, men going nowhere. Their clothes were shapeless and dirty gray; they walked with a slouch and some talked from the corner of their mouths. I stood there for a moment, watching the gray pattern, the light faces and

the darker ones, the tired eyes of the old and the cold eyes of the young. They knew I was there. The news had already swept across the yard and I could see the solid mass ripple, like water kicked up by the wind. I suppose I should have considered that there were men in that yard who had no use for me or any warden; that there were also men



Clinton Duffy: Warden 1940-1951

who had murdered other men for small change or just for the hell of it. There were probably no less than 200 knives, daggers, blackjacks and other hidden weapons somewhere in those thousands of pockets and sleeves. I suppose I should have remembered that I was no longer a clerk but a man who might be worth kidnapping because I could order gates unlocked and guard fire withheld."

But Duffy didn't think of these things. As demonstrated time and again during the 11 years that followed, he saw the men on that yard not as strangers or criminals or even numbers on file cards, but as individual human beings whose virtues and faults he knew better than anyone else. After all, he had studied and prepared their case histories for the parole board.

From the yard, the new warden walked directly into the mess hall and watched the last men for lunch shuffle in and out. Overhead, on the steel catwalks stretching across and around the 200 foot hall, four gun guards were marching their restless patrols, their automatic rifles prodding the air.

Then and there he decided that since guns were not exactly an appetizing influence, he would ban them from where men ate. Duffy then noticed that the lukewarm beef stew being served that day had little or no beef in it. "Beef costs money," said the civilian steward. "Why don't you add dumplings to your stew for a change?" asked Duffy. "Can't be done. Never been done," replied the steward.

"Tomorrow you serve stew again. This time with dumplings and once a week thereafter," Duffy ordered, deciding the prison would soon have a new steward. Furthermore, he would increase the inmate food budget

of \$.19 a day to \$.75 a day.

To the officers' infinite surprise, the new warden walked leisurely back to his office unharmed. Duffy was secure in the knowledge that unlike many a prison reformer before him, he was personally strong enough not to confuse fairness with softness.

That afternoon, Duffy continued one of the most dramatic housecleaning jobs in penal history. He tore up the previous warden's list of prison stool pigeons and stripped convict politicians of their power.

Already a brutish captain was gone as well as six other sadistic "screws" and five disgruntled old-timers who considered the kid crazy. The dungeon was dead. And so were the lashes, straps and rubber hoses. Numbered uniforms and shaved heads would never again be seen at San Quentin.

Starting the next morning, convicts placed in isolation would no longer be fed from buckets. A modern cafeteria would be installed as soon as possible and a dietician in place by week's end. Duffy's final order on his first day as warden was to order the laundry to press all inmate shirts and pants. "Such small things will foster the rebirth of self-respect," he told his staff.

(Researched and written by Don DeNevi. Part three will appear in the next issue of the SQ News)

Court Ruling

Continued from Page 1

The historic case began more than 21 years ago when Jay Lee Gates, an inmate at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville, filed a lawsuit in Sacramento federal court protesting the quality of his health care. The Gates' lawsuit was eventually converted into a class action lawsuit and combined with two subsequent class action suits also over unconstitutionally substandard medical care.

The three-judge panel is composed of District Judges Thelton E. Henderson of San Francisco, Lawrence K. Karlton of Sacramento and Circuit Judge Stephen R. Reinhardt of Los Angeles. Each of the three judges formerly oversaw one of the three original class action lawsuits which together formed the present case.

Each jurist was appointed to the panel by the chief judge of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals under provisions of the Federal Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1996. It is the first time judges have acted under the 1996 act, which, ironically, was originally designed to limit the power of judges in prisoner rights cases.

The Act authorizes the formation of a special judicial panel which may, in extreme cases, order the early release of prison-

ers if the panel decides that all other options have been exhausted.

Henderson and Karlton have each already ruled that the state is providing unconstitutionally substandard medical and mental health care in violation of inmate's rights. Karlton ruled in 1995 that the state's prison mental health system violated the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment. Henderson in 2005 made a similar ruling regarding medical care and appointed a federal receiver to take over the medical system through a three to five year rebuilding period.

In his 2005 ruling, Henderson found that an inmate was dying unnecessarily every six to seven days as a result of poor quality health care.

Attorneys for the state maintain that conditions are improving and they are quick to say that California now spends an average of nearly \$14,000 a year per inmate on medical care, a figure among the highest in the nation. Experts in the areas of inmate health care and prison operations are scheduled to testify for both sides.

"The state has put its money where its mouth is," said Paul Mello, an attorney for the state. He points out that state spending

on prisoner health care has jumped from \$345 million in 1995 to nearly \$2.2 billion today. "There have been significant improvements," he said.

Meanwhile, attorneys maintain that three of the state's 33 prisons currently hold about 230 percent more inmates than they were designed for, and that such overcrowding prohibits prisoners from having jobs or going to educational and rehabilitation programs. Classrooms, gymnasiums and meeting rooms have been converted to dormitory space.

The state currently has over 5,000 male inmates housed in private prisons in states such as Mississippi, Oklahoma, Arizona, and Tennessee in response to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's 2006 declared state of emergency due to prison overcrowding. An additional 3,000 inmates are scheduled to be shipped out of state by the end of 2009, according to the CDCR website.

Attorneys for the inmates played a clip of a television interview for the court in which Schwarzenegger says "the situation is a recipe for disaster." He also said that he didn't blame the courts "for stepping in to try to solve the (prison) health care crisis that we have, the overcrowding crisis that we have. For decades the state of California hasn't really taken it seriously."

The Schwarzenegger admini-

stration maintains that steps are being taken to reduce the population, including changing parole policies and adding rehabilitation programs in an effort to reduce recidivism. They say that massive spending has been approved to add additional beds and space in the prison system.

The Schwarzenegger administration has rejected recent attempts by the federal receiver overseeing medical operations, J. Clark Kelso, to collect the \$8 billion he says he needs to build medical and health centers and improve existing facilities.

And all of this comes at a time when the state is staggering under a budget deficit which has ballooned to a mind-boggling \$11 billion. As of Oct. 1, 2008, the state owed \$57.3 billion in outstanding debt in addition to another \$78.2 billion that has been previously authorized for borrowing.

If the state borrows all of the money that the Schwarzenegger administration has requested for prison beds and additional medical facilities it will cost the state taxpayers \$1.2 billion each year to repay the debt. The administration plans to finance the construction with a type of bonds that do not require voter approval.

The three judges had originally decreed that testimony in the non-jury trial's first phase would conclude by Dec. 19, 2008, but the

quick pace of the much-watched trial has surprised many courtroom observers. No date has been set for a decision in the trial. The judges have in the past made numerous rulings sympathetic to, and in favor of, the inmates' cause.

The 9th Circuit Court rebuffed the state's strenuous attempts to block formation of the three-judge panel, ruling it (the 9th Circuit) had no jurisdiction in rejecting the state's appeal. Any appeal of the three-judge panel's ultimate decision must go directly to the more conservative U.S. Supreme Court. California Republican lawmakers are preparing an appeal to the Supreme Court in the event that the panel orders an early release of inmates.

The powerful prison guards' union, which went to court in an unsuccessful attempt to block the Schwarzenegger administration's plans to transfer inmates out of state, openly supports the inmates' lawsuit. Attorney Gregg Adam of the California Correctional Peace Officers' Association says overcrowding increases tension and an atmosphere of violence behind bars, and has a "dehumanizing effect on correctional staff."

California's prisons currently hold approx 170,000 prisoners in a space designed for just over half that number.

Insight Factor at Work

The Graduates of "Victim's Offender Education Group Next Step"

By DARRELL C. HARTLEY
& MICHAEL R. HARRIS

Staff Writer
Managing Editor

A group of violent crime survivors and perpetrators recently came together for a remarkable night of healing.

The Oct. 20 graduation event began with the soaring majesty of a choir, whose words of wisdom ultimately set the tone for the evening in Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel.

It was the concluding evening of The Victim Offender Education Group (VOEG), a 22-week course that covers such topics as crime impact, self as victim, cycle of offense, impact on victims and relapse prevention. At weeks 20 and 21 the VOEG facilitators create a safe space for dialogue with a panel of victims.

This allows victims of violent crimes to share their experiences and the profound effects that crime continues to have on their lives. It is an open dialogue with the convicted men of the program, who are also given an opportunity to outline the impact that their crimes have had on themselves, their victims and society in general.

The cases of the victims and perpetrators are not usually connected. Instead the experience serves as a medium for connecting people that remain in pain.

"This is a historical night in San Quentin," said Patrick Mims, a co-facilitator of the program. Beginning in 2004, with a class of 13, VOEG has graduated 79 people. Mims spoke for all when he thanked The Insight Prison Project Executive Director Jacques Verduin, Restorative Justice Program Manager Rochelle Edwards, and VOEG facilitator Jack Dyson for their foresight in creating this program and Warden Robert L. Ayers, Jr., Deputy Chief Max Lemon and Community Partnership Manager Laura Bowman for allowing programs like these to become commonplace at San Quentin.

Edwards took center stage and first thanked her guests, the survivors of violent crimes. She also thanked The San Quentin administration, IPP represented by Verduin, IPP Program Director James Fox and Associate Director/VOEG facilitator Jamie Karroll, VOEG facilitator Jack Dyson, VOEG co-facilitators William Amos, Robert Frye, Patrick Mims, Dennis Pratt, Leonard Rubio and Phillip "P.J." Seiler.

Finally she offered tearful, heartfelt thanks to her husband for his encouragement and support. Edwards spoke of the commitment and dedication the graduates maintained during the 12-month course that went four months beyond schedule. "We were at the one year mark and you were asking me when we were going to graduate. In as much as I wanted for you to graduate, I just was not ready to let you go. Now that you are here, I want to let you know that



VOEG graduates with their diplomas

I am so happy that we had the extra time. I am very proud of you."

Edwards went on to give special thanks to all invited guests and Catholic Chaplain Father Stephen Barber in his tireless efforts in supporting Restorative Justice Projects.

Guest speaker Brian Smith, who paroled from San Quentin in 2007, gave a moving, inspirational speech on how he does his very best to be a force of change to those who remain in the clutches of negativity, self-loathing and addiction. Employed as an addiction counselor at a local substance abuse center, Brian said, "Change begins in the here and now and not in the hereafter. I changed my life because it was not just the right thing to do; it was the only thing to do. My change was not for the parole board, not for family, not for somebody else. It was for me. It is up to you how you want your new beginning to end. I know that you can and will do it."

Several members of VOEG Next Step graduation class of 2008 spoke of their appreciation for the program, the facilitators and group members.

Ronald Martin said, "Through this program, my life is definitely changed forever."

Bobby Brown spoke of "the opportunity to connect and find growth in the process."

Darnell Hill vowed that he will "continue to do everything I can to become a source of change in the lives of those who desire to do so. Don't listen to what I say, watch what I do."

Steve Higuere said he is "thankful and grateful for who I am today and most assuredly will never hurt anyone ever again."

Richard Lindsey added, "It's about doing the work!"

Greg Sanders spoke on how VOEG has allowed him to "become a better man through and through."

Albert Hernandez says that VOEG has "taught me special lessons that I can share for a lifetime."

Juan Navarette thanked VOEG for the opportunity to serve others.

Harry Barton said that he has "learned a great deal about my crime, myself, and the lives of

others."

Tuan Tran stated that VOEG has "raised his consciousness to understand the impact that I caused in the life of my victim's family."

James Houston stated that he is most thankful that VOEG "allowed me to become accountable and responsible for my crime, to find the courage to forgive my father and challenged me to listen, speak and be heard."

Demetrius Daniel credits VOEG for his "continued commitment and focus in being a mentor to those who endure their own difficult circumstances."

Edwards, Dyson, Karroll and Verduin presented diplomas to each of the graduates of VOEG. At the end of the diploma presentation, Verduin presented Edwards with a purple leather-bound journal from a group of women in Nepal, which will be signed on an individual page by each VOEG NEXT STEP graduate.

Additionally, there was a wide variety of commentary from participants, administration and guests.

Bowman said she was delighted on how well the event turned out. "What a night! The program was excellent. I am looking forward to the next series of graduations."

Fox commented on a personal level how profound the evening was for him. "Just take a look around you; there is a great deal of healing in this place."

Former ARC/ACT I&II Director Claire Elizabeth DeSophia said that she was impressed on how well organized the event was. "I appreciate how each graduate spoke from the heart on how the VOEG program has changed their lives and how the spirit of the choir in music and singing rang through."

Smith added, "What more can I say? There is a great sense of purpose in this place. I can see and feel positive change here. I was pleased to be involved."

At the conclusion of this historic evening, the East Bay Church of Religious Science choir, graduates and audience formed a circle and sang a song of joy and healing.

Verduin summed up the evening in only one word: "Awesome."

SQ Addiction Counseling Program

By DARRELL C. HARTLEY
Staff Writer

The greatest quality an Addiction Recovery program can possess is Unconditional Positive regard—the ability to accept everyone with love, compassion and respect. The program is under the direction of Addiction Recovery Counseling Center Clinical Director Rick Baez and the gold standard of addiction counselor training in 42 countries and 38 states: CAADAC (The California Association of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Counselors).

Additionally, the addiction counselor educational requirements and responsibilities have been enlarged to include greater focus on pharmacology, skill development in the selection and use of diagnostic measures, and proficiency in multidisciplinary treatment planning and healthcare delivery.

As it relates to alcohol and drug addiction, Warden Robert L. Ayers spoke directly to the issue of recidivism stating: "This was an idea dreamed up by the men in blue here; their efforts have put this thing on the map. These counseling re-

sources will be used to break this vicious cycle. We are taking additional steps to target the guys in orange, 60 percent of which have six months or less and 20 percent are Reception Center violators."

Inmate David Sievers, a 2007 ARC graduate, says the program gave him "hope, strength and courage to stay clean and sober."

Addiction counselor trainee Clinton Avalos adds, "Understanding addiction has allowed me to never second guess others who are taking necessary steps in addressing their pain."

The ARC program has screened 266 inmates with 218 intakes. A total of 175 began treatment and 83 completed the four month addiction treatment program. Currently, there are 21 inmates in treatment. The intense, comprehensive process groups and informative presentations allow one to endure the circumstances of their trials with diversity being the greatest asset to this philosophy. This equates to a pre-eminent program that is powerful in its impact to each participant involved.

San Quentin Veterans Help Santa

By ALY TAMBOURA

The Vietnam Veterans Group of San Quentin (VVGSG) will be assisting Santa Claus in the San Quentin visiting rooms where he will be giving out gifts to the children and young family members of prisoners.

The gifts will be handed out by Santa and his elves in the visiting rooms starting Dec. 12 and will continue on Fridays and weekends until Christmas Day. Children from toddlers to 14 years of age are able to receive gifts, according to Santa. Santa is also available for pictures, so please remember to purchase your picture ducats ahead of time in the canteen.

The VVGSG is celebrating its 20th annual toy drive this year.

"Last year we handed out over 350 bags of toys," says Eddie Renteria, who is the only prisoner who gets to talk directly to Santa.



Photo By Eddie Renteria

The gift bags Santa will be giving out contain all sorts of goodies, according to Renteria. He says last years gifts included games, basketballs, footballs, action figures, remote control cars and much more.

"The declining economy has had an adverse affect on some of our corporate sponsors' ability to donate this year," says Renteria. "But individual donations from people seem to be making up the difference."

If you wish to make a donation or have any questions contact Lt. Cramer at Ext. 5757

Arts & Entertainment

‘Brothers In Pen’ Third Anthology

By ZOE MULLERY

A new anthology of fiction and creative non-fiction is being written in an on-going writing workshop at San Quentin State Prison by 12 men, mostly Lifers, all serious writers. A strong theme emerging from this collection is the nature of violence and its effects on human beings, and the kind of struggle required to turn violence around.

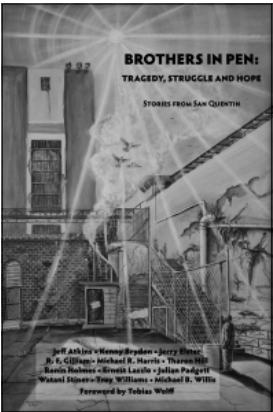
The subtitle of this anthology, “Tragedy, Struggle, and Hope,” speaks to this kind of vision. However, the seriousness of the subject matter doesn’t mean these stories are all

heavy and harsh. There is much humor, wisdom, complexity and hope to be found in these pages.

You’ll encounter struggles of temptation and forgiveness, soul-searching inquiries into the past, tragic love stories, battle bots, psychogenic amnesia, first-person accounts of Black Power history, pre-historic family drama, gang cease-fires, tommyknockers, and much more.

The class had the honor of Tobias Wolff visiting and contributing a foreword for this book.

Proceeds from this book go through the William James Association to support the program. To order go to: brothersinpen.wordpress.com.



The Ophir Prison Marching Kazoo Band

San Quentin Receives ‘The Ophir Prison Marching Kazoo Band & Temperance Society’

Bizarre events were happening in San Quentin. Warden Robert Ayers, Jr., stepped up to the microphone on the lower yard and announced that the California “State Prison” at “Ophir” was closed, and the members of the marching band were transferred to San Quentin. In a gesture of good will, these newly arrived (volunteer) “inmates” decided to put on a concert on the lower yard.

On Saturday November 22, 2008, the band came marching down the paved road from the Garden Chapel area. The group of misfits played their musical instruments while Captain Rufus T. Whizbang headed the procession. Rules must be totally slack where these dudes rolled in from, carrying contraband of every sort, including a rubber chicken. Hats which included beer kegs set off a lax dress code that no respectable convict might wear.

Proudly dragging the rubber chicken at the rear of the procession, the band marched to a prepared stage. With a few more bars of their marching tune, the band ended with a loud shout of, “Up yours!”

Captain Whizbang, wearing a pith helmet with a huge windup knob attached to the top, got the gathering crowd going with raucous talk of drinking beer. The part of being a “Temperance Society” seemed to be from a time before they all had slipped off the wagon.

The music was tight, playing familiar tunes. A SQTV video showed them on temporary community release marching in local parades. In the end, the inmates were applauded loudly by San Quentin prisoners. A reversal in the transfer must have come about, being that they marched back up the hill under heavy escort, never to be seen again.

-SQ News Staff

Snippets & Quotes

The most shoplifted book in the world is the Bible.

It used to be illegal to celebrate Christmas in the United States. Christmas did not become an official holiday until 1870. Prior to this the Massachusetts General Court, in 1659, ordered a five-shilling fine to be paid by any person caught celebrating Christmas. The law was revoked in 1681.

The two robbers crucified next to Jesus were Dimas and Gestas. Their names are not mentioned in the Gospels but can be found in the Gospel of Nicodemus, one of the many books of Christian Apocrypha.

You can die from drinking too much coffee. What is too much? According to researchers, a lethal amount of caffeine is about 10 grams. The average adult would have to drink between 50 and 200 cups in a quick succession to ingest 10 grams of caffeine.

Each square inch of the average adult’s skin hosts approximately 20 million microorganisms. There are more microscopic bugs crawling around on a single person than there are humans on the earth. Ewww!

The German measles have their name because they were discovered by a German.

When I was a kid I used to pray every night for a new bicycle. Then I realized that the Lord doesn’t work that way so I stole one and asked Him to forgive me.

-Emo Philips

Only two things are infinite—the universe and human stupidity, and I’m not so sure about the universe.

-Albert Einstein

LAST MONTH’S SUDOKU SOLUTION

7	8	3	1	4	9	6	2	5
6	2	5	7	8	3	4	9	1
9	4	1	2	6	5	8	3	7
4	1	7	3	5	2	9	6	8
2	3	9	6	7	8	5	1	4
5	6	8	4	9	1	3	7	2
3	5	6	8	2	7	1	4	9
8	7	4	9	1	6	2	5	3
1	9	2	5	3	4	7	8	6

A Christmas Poem

By LYNN

That first Christmas that was so long,
long ago
Was part of a true story that all of us should
know.

Jesus, God’s Son, really did come,
To save us all and not just some.
Mary and Joseph knelt in reverence and awe,
While looking at the baby so holy and small.
The shepherds came from off the hill,
And all who are wise seek Him still.
The three kings traveled so long and so far,
Praising and thanking that God sent a star.
The angels sang and gave God the glory.
And just think, you are the reason for this story.

Reprinted from: A New Perspective
Minnesota Correctional Facility-Oak Park Heights
Still Water, MN

A Single Footprint

By HARRISON MISIOKA SEUGA

Shallow waters, soft rippling surfs that wash ashore on tranquil sands – displacing the permanence of innocence, like unsettled lands...

Unsettling the world with a single footprint --- impressions of progress implanted in her soil, displacing the cycles of nature’s shores...

Rising seas – melting ice caps, tumultuous weather patterns, and dying trees – a single footprint buried to the knee...

Carbon monoxide – ozone depletion, global destruction by consumer production --- a single footprint, progresses induction... Acid rain --- acidic seas, oceanic sustainability over-arching availability...

Over-population – over-harvesting – over doing it, in a suffocating concoction...

A single footprint buried to the knee, sustainability sacrificed by industrialized greed --- progresses induction of global destruction --- a catastrophe in motion along rising oceans...



SUDOKU by George Lowe

1				3		5		2
	8					7	9	
	3			5	9	6	8	
		8						5
		5	3	8	1	4		
6						1		
	5	1	2	4			7	
	2	6					1	
8		7		6				9

Tragedy, Struggle and Hope

A Reading From San Quentin's Creative Writing Class

By RAPHAEL E. CALIX

On an overcast Sabbath morning at San Quentin by the Bay a very special reading was taking place in a classroom. Convicts and civilians gathered to listen intently to what the "Brothers in Pen" were about to share on this special day.

The experience of men making time work itself out was quite revealing. It spoke of the human spirit that strives and yearns for expression, serving as a survival tool as convicts reach deep within to discover the hidden meanings in life.

A reading that captured close attention was the experience of one particular brother. Animated and passionate, he made some others shudder and listen more intently. His readings spoke to a tragedy of the inner cities, where a little girl had succumbed to the perils of drug addiction. Michael "Harry O" Harris, was caught up in this struggle to save her, but he himself was also a victim, because he was one of the players to bring large quantities of cocaine into her neighborhood. His life had been a classical duel between good and bad inclination where blind ambition had won out and he had become a "pusher man" to young and old alike. Suddenly, Harris woke up from what had been a nightmare, 20 years of dark dreams in a prison cell.

Another reading came from Jeff Atkins, whose life inside San Quentin was on installments. Most of his memories focused in on his bouts with drug addiction and the loss of his family. The ups and downs in his life must have made listeners feel dizzy. But his hope for a better life was quite evident as he, too, made strides to change and better himself. Sadness and setbacks have a way of bringing out the best qualities in a man. Maybe this



Steve Emerick and Zoe Mullery with the Arts in Corrections Writing Group

is why the civilian guests were eager to hear more.

The diversity of readings made for a good exchange between the reader and the listener. From the concrete jungles to green hills, people are the same wherever they happen to be.

Kenny Brydon read from his memoirs. He spoke of a funeral that had brought him face to face with loved ones. An event that was so emotional in the company of ones that are so close. "A body lying in a coffin" was a striking image for him to share, prompting reactions in the classroom that were stiff and still. Brydon's voice trembled; perhaps the past and the present had become one for him. All was done in the spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness,

for himself and his family, or so it did appear.

Troy Williams, aka "Bones," began his reading from the pages of the book, "Brothers In Pen." His words enticed the listeners. Terrorism and relevant issues of today painted a familiar image. Police actions, resistance and repression, violence and brutality, all held the audience's rapt attention. William's descriptions came to life as his characters struggled to survive. Listeners were certainly living in the moment.

Now it was Luke Padgett's turn. He spoke in a clear and even tone: "How could being in a cage not change a man?" His expressive manner took the form of a theater musing, the classroom was a stage and Luke was the performer in a

play. "Natalie's" spirit came to life through him, and everyone began to know her almost as well as Padgett.

Jerry Elster's reading was alertly given in light of his current plight as a CDCR client. "Top Dog" was weaving his way through the maze of prison violence. In his reading of "Naked Feet On Cold Concrete," dodging shanks and gun towers was an everyday occurrence inside and a survival guide is what he was now sharing. Denials of parole piled up as accomplishments rained down. "Top Dog" was still in the pen and his end was near. William "Top Dog" Vanderbilt's body was dressed out to his family one sad day.

Ronin Holmes began his real life experience from the tip of his pen writing on his

heart. "The loss of a loved one inside leaves no room for mourning." He had to move on with his time in the joint. Love is never ending. "Giving it is better than accepting it." Many maxims lined his portrait of love within the walls. His thoughts cascaded into the heads of his listeners: "I believe in the power of love," and so he was happy and peaceful in the reading he now delivered.

Michael "Charlie K Complex" Willis shared from some of the horror stories inside the psychiatric wards and institutions. He spoke of innocence betrayed by the trusted and the fight of the depressed to be free. It was clinical, analytical and sharp. "Charlie K Complex" accented what was a masterful grouping and readings by the "Brothers In Pen."

After the readings, questions were thrown at the readers. Williams explained, "A lot of our stories have their roots inside of these places, and now this is our way of telling people outside about the positive side that makes us more than prisoners or convicts." Larry "Watani" Stiner spoke, "It provides the connection that will one day mend our communities." Steve Emerick (Arts in Corrections) noted that the stories covered a wide spectrum of emotions. Zoe Mullery, Arts Creative Writing instructor, expressed her reaction to the readings: "I was very proud. It was a memorable time for all of us. I love getting to see them shine with all that's in them. I get to see that often, each week during class, but it's good to have an audience from the outside hear the words and ideas from their hearts." Zoe's eyes were still glowing with pride. I am certain that she was not alone. San Quentin by the Bay is a historic place where history and historians are ever busy making it shine!

What Chanukah Means To Me

By CHAPLAIN HYMAN

It is light in the time of darkness. In the Maccabee struggle to worship as they chose, they showed the courage to fight for their values in the face of overwhelming adversity. The downside is that victory is sometimes more dangerous to the human soul than defeat. Human beings don't handle power well.



What Christmas Means To Me

By PASTOR MORRIS CURRY

On a winter evening in England, a lady and her son were driving as it began to snow. As it became heavy, the lady couldn't see, and she wound up in a ditch. The mother and son went and found a country home.



The lady of the house invited her in, and cared for her bringing hot tea and food. Later, the owner of the home discovered she had helped the Queen of England and her son, the heir to the throne. So, Christmas is a remembrance of a King who visited.

By FATHER STEPHEN BARBER

Christmas is the moment in history which unfolds the intersection between



divine human life. In the words of Barack Obama, "As God has his hand on the arc of human history. Christmas is the intersection between God and humanity in Jesus."

Death Penalty Delay Upheld

Continued from Page 1

Opponents of the death penalty see this as opportunity for Californians to reevaluate capital punishment, which was reinstated in the state in 1976.

The death penalty has been abolished in all western countries except the U.S.

Critics of capital punishment assert that in the U.S. at least 400 innocent people have been convicted of capital crimes they did not commit, of which 23 have been executed. As fatal errors escalate, many voters reconsider capital punishment.

In the U.S. there is declining public acceptance of capital punishment as a viable

deterrent to crime, say critics. This opposition is amid pressure by the European Union, whose members have expressed deep concerns about the increasing number of executions in the United States. All the more since the great majority of executions since reinstatement of the death penalty in 1976 have been carried out in the 1990s. Furthermore, in the U.S. offenders who are under 18 years of age at the time of the commission of the crime may be sentenced to death and executed.

Opinion

A Room With a View of Death Row

By ALI R. MUHAMMED
Contributing Writer

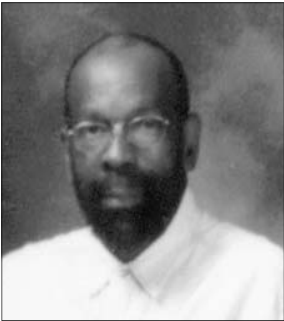
Where I lie there is despair, but above what demons haunt those who dwell there. As a Lifer who resides in north block, I often wonder about the plight of those condemned men who live on the sixth floor A section, known as North Seg. (North Segregation) a part of California's death row.

Albert Camus once wrote, *"What then is capital punishment but the most premeditated of murders, to which no criminal's deed, however calculated it may be, can be compared."*

America's death row residents are men and women who walk the razor's edge between half-life and certain death. These are America's condemned who bear a stigma far worse than "prisoner." Life there oscillates between the

banal and the bizarre.

Unlike other prisoners, condemned prisoners are not "doing time." Freedom does not shine at the end of the tunnel. Rather, the end of the tunnel brings extinction. Thus, for many here, there is no hope.



All death rows' share a central goal: "Human storage" in an austere world in which condemned prisoners are treated as bodies kept alive to be killed.

To such men and women the actual execution is a fait accompli, a formality already accomplished in spirit. The state concludes its premeditated drama by putting the "dead" to death a second time.

To do justice for self, one must consistently battle the harsh reality that this is it and what can I do for the future, a day not yet dawned? Despair not of the "Mercy."

Journalism Taught with Appreciation

By COMANCHE

The fall semester of San Quentin's Patten's Prison University Project (PUP) offered a journalism course.

As a student enrolled in PUP for several years, the journalism class was a welcome change of pace. The time and effort Jody Lewen and Jennifer Scaife put into making this class available was greatly appreciated.

My quest for more knowledge is enhanced by their offering these innovative courses. Journalism has taught me how to write more effectively and eloquently.

Our instructor, Nigel Hatton, a journalism instructor and former reporter is an excellent choice for providing the students with the best education available. Jody and Jennifer, kudos to you for making this student's journey in academia an enlightening experience.

H-Unit MAC Meeting

By DAVID MARSH

Present for the Administration: Capt. Dorsey, Lt. Ericson, Sgt. Taylor, CCI Morgan, Debra Sheldon

Time/Location: Admin. Bd. - H-Unit, Fri., 11-14-08

Topics of Discussion: Inmates must be on the movement sheet for 6:20 programs (Ranch will be escorted). • Problem with lists not making it to WP 13 was discussed. • Inmate/staff and staff/inmate lack of respect – along with incidents of inmates being verbally abused by staff. • Possible staff retaliation for 602's (Capt. Dorsey gave personal assurances that he would handle any retaliation).

• Dorsey objected strenuously to inmates submitting pre-typed/mass produced 602's (Dorsey says that staff will respond with pre-typed/mass produced replies). • Administration says that religious services will be duplicated

and offered in H-Unit (has not happened as of yet). • Staff reports that in January portable units for medical services will be set-up in the area below Tower 9. • Morgan addressed the issue of high control parolees leaving on Mondays instead of Fridays (issue to be decided by inmate's agent). • Dorsey says that phones will be repaired (dorms have reported subsequent improvement in number of working phones). • Taylor says that he will address the problem of slow release from chow hall in the morning (no improvement has been noted). • Council brought up the repair of beds – staff response was that work repair orders are as much as a year behind • Slow pace of pill call lines in H-Unit was discussed (two lines are now being employed with some improvement noted). • Meeting was adjourned

The Doctor Phil Show Films at San Quentin

By DARNELL HILL

Is there a doctor in the house? San Quentin Utilization of Inmate Resources Experiences and Studies (S.Q.U.I.R.E.S.) has once again been given the opportunity to emphasize there are men here who stand accountable for their actions and are willing to do the work it takes to give back to their family, friends and communities. The Dr. Phil show and the S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. program established a collaborative effort to motivate two young men, Chris, 14, and Brit, 18, to change their negative attitudes and behaviors before serious consequences take control of their lives: jail, prison or death.

Chris and Brit are two vibrant young men who are fighting the inner child within, while trying to understand family dynamics, unhealthy friendships and the right of passage into manhood. Chris and Brit arrived here in SQ around 9 a.m. on a Friday morning. The camera crew and one of Dr. Phil's directors, Stephen Doran came in. The doctor himself was not in the house, but there were eight "therapists" prepared and ready to build some emotional and sociological motivation within these two young men's hearts and minds. As Chris, Brit and the camera crew came through the many gates, bars and doors of SQ, they were met by eight S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. members: Ernest Morgan, Michael Taylor, James Houston, David Monroe, Shaid Rouse, Jerry Elster, David Pretzele and myself.

As Chris and Brit shook our hands, each had a façade of

assurance on the outside but we were able to sense their fear. We quickly let Chris and Brit know they are not welcome here. As we began to walk through the lower yard we asked Chris and Brit to look the men in the eyes. We wanted them to get a feeling of the intensity and mixed emotions of fear and uncertainty that comes from walking for the first time across the SQ big yard with all eyes on you.

Once we arrived in the classroom we quickly began the S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. introduction, which prepared Chris and Brit to be open and honest. Each S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. member gave a brief introduction of themselves, what kind of crimes we committed (murder, kidnap, robbery), and how much time we had spent inside. Between the eight of us we had over a hundred years served. More importantly, we spoke about getting to the point of no return with irresponsible behavior: drugs, alcohol and negative influences. Chris seemed to be pretty straightforward and open and honest with us. With his belligerent attitude and sarcasm, Brit thought he could BS his way through the whole process, but he soon realized he was dealing with the best therapist he had ever met. Slowly but surely he dropped the façade and came to the surface of truth.

Chris described himself as a teenager struggling with anger issues. Brit was a seemingly bright young man with arrogance and an ego so big that you could smell the stench. The experience and challenge for the S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. members was liberating and fulfilling. As

S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. members we emulate the mode, "We don't scare straight, we communicate!" Our goal is not only to share our experience, but our hearts as well. We believe that troubled youth are motivated by examples that offer insight and encouragement. Our hope is that the kids we come into contact with will learn from their mistakes and make better choices in spite of the effects of dysfunctional households, friendships and communities.

The end result of Chris and Brit's experience with S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. was inspiring for everyone. Chris learned that his father's insults (stupid, worthless...) may be reflections of how his dad felt about himself. So Chris doesn't have to take it personally. Brit learned that although he says he doesn't care about his mom abandoning him, there are resentment and denial issues that are influencing his abuse of drugs and alcohol. Like many of us, Chris and Brit are trying to find answers to a never ending story — the effects of dysfunctional households. Although Doctor Phil was not in the house, we feel that some serious emotional healing took place. As S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. members, once again we accomplished our goal through the planting seeds of insight and offering the gift of hope.

The Doctor Phil Show should air Chris and Brit's story sometime in November or December. Member's of the S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. hope that those who read this article, or see the show, learn from the Chris and Brit stories.

Haterism What it Means to be a Hater

By MUJAHID ASAD
Contributing Writer

Most of us here at San Quentin have used the term "hating" at one time or another. And almost certainly, at one time or another we've also indulged in the act of hating, either consciously or unconsciously.

In looking around me, it has become apparent to me that hating has reached an all-time high over the past two years. I feel compelled to address this situation in the hope that it will help some of us stop the hating before it spreads further.

HA-TER (adv) i.e.: to hate, to spew ill will towards something. Someone who is generally negative and in bad spirits, someone who is constantly putting someone or something down, always finding fault in something, rather than seeing the good. A person who feels anger or jealousy for someone who has succeeded in something they have worked hard for. Someone who speaks badly or takes negative actions in an attempt to create problems for a

successful person.

"Hater" is a term that I originally heard some 15 or 20 years ago. While watching a football game with some friends, I heard someone say something bad about one guy's team and he replied, "You're a hater!" At the time I thought that it was an appropriate term.

Since then it has expanded into many different applications. Just as the applications of the word have grown, so have those that attempt to apply it to others. For I see them everywhere I go.

It's almost as if they are being mass manufactured. On a daily basis someone will say to me "I don't like him, or them." When I ask them why they feel this way, they really have no reasons. This all seems so crazy to me.

I am sure that we have all indulged in hater-ism at some point or another. As we mature and possess more knowledge, it just stands to reason that we would choose to discontinue this behavior. To hate is a wasted emotion that serves no purpose. It will harm the one

who hates much more than it ever could the one he hates.

More often than not when we examine why we hate, there is no basis for the way we feel. Some of these haters will expose themselves occasionally. They will allow it to reach a level where they may verbalize their hatred for you. Here is a reply that I once used towards hatred: "I'm flattered that you have put so much of your time into observing me. I really wish I could do the same for you; it's just that I've got too many things to do that are more important."

Here are a few questions that you might ask yourself to see if you have been engaging in hating: 1. When your homeboy is going home, is your first thought, "He'll be back!"? 2. When someone you know is getting a visit, do you think or say "Why would someone come visit him?" 3. Do you ever say something behind someone's back, purposely knowing they are going to hear about it, but not from you? 4. Have you ever wished you had something someone else had, and that they didn't have it?

Warden Ayers, Farewell!

Continued from Page 1

The following is a Q&A interview with Warden Ayers:

Q: There is common knowledge that you have a military background. Would you provide the readers with a brief history.

A: I entered the U.S. Army in 1966 and served Golf Company 50th Infantry (LRP). After my discharge, I accepted a direct commission to first lieutenant, Infantry. For the remainder of my reserve career, I was in the 91st Division, 7th PSYOP Battalion, and 104th Division, until my final assignment as commander, 1st Battalion, 415th Infantry, 104th Division after which I entered the Retired Reserve and completely retired from United States Army in 2007.

Q: Why did you choose to come back from retirement? Why San Quentin?

A: After my retirement in 2000 I continued to do some work with the department. I simply wasn't ready to completely quit working. In 2005 the CDCR asked if I would be the interim warden at Lancaster State Prison (LAC) for 60 to 90 days. That experience reminded me that it really was fun being a warden. Sometimes vexing, sometimes exasperating, but mostly fun. At the end of my tenure with LAC, I was asked if I would consider re-instating to be the warden at San Quentin. I knew SQ was experiencing difficulties — everything from keeping a warden to operational, personnel and litigation issues. Having spent my first 18 years in the department at SQ, I thought it would be a good "parting shot" to do whatever I could to help restore some dignity to SQ.

Q: What is your view on the rehabilitation efforts emphasized by CDCR?

A: San Quentin is widely known as the "program prison." Because of its location, history and name there is no shortage

of people wanting to come into SQ and help. Many of the program activities are evidence-based, scientifically designed processes intended to address behavioral, social or ideological issues which make it difficult for many men to stay out of prison. I was disappointed that SQ was not selected as a rollout institution for CDCR's efforts. I know there are significant resources in CDCR trying to put together comprehensive, state of the art, evidence-based program models. I also know a couple of sites (not San Quentin) have been selected to pioneer these models. When (if) they are ever started, I would hope to see an enhancement to public safety. If we can do something with incarcerated people to reduce their proclivity to, upon their release, create new victims then we have done something positive in furtherance of public safety.

Q: With the financial crisis facing the state, in what stage does SQ currently stand on revamping the Prison Health Care System?

A: The receiver's efforts are taking two slightly different tacks: 1. San Quentin and 2. Everywhere else. At San Quentin, building and staffing augmentation continue and are providing solid healthcare infrastructure. By the close of 2009 I expect San Quentin healthcare staff will be able to address 90 percent of inmates' healthcare issues on site. If attained, that will be an unqualified success for San Quentin and its inmate population.

Q: Some of your critics believe that you maintain a liberal policy advocated before your administration. What is the major difference in San Quentin before Warden Ayers, and after, as a matter of legacy?

A: I don't know about "liberal policy." I go back to what I said earlier about public safety. About 80 percent of the incarcerated people eventually go back to our communities. Do

we want them to return with the same values and thought processes they had when they went to prison? I believe we should do everything we can with incarcerated people to deter them from re-victimizing society (creating new victims) upon their release. That is public safety. If that makes me liberal, I guess I am guilty. The question of before and after is simple. San Quentin had built a reputation of being what I described as the epicenter of anarchy. People—staff, inmates, volunteers —pretty much did whatever they wanted. If a policy or procedure was inconvenient or unpopular, people just ignored it. Consistency was a relatively unknown practice. Those who did care about following policy and procedure had largely given up as they believed they were a minority. My goal was simple: get people to follow the rules — policy and procedures. And fairness becomes a stable element in the core of our day.

Q: There were many self-help programs born in San Quentin during your administration. Would you highlight some of these programs and the measure of their success?

A: I think most of these programs have been here all along. Our efforts were geared to structuring them into a cohesive and interdependent platform. The most striking example of this is the Stand Up program in H Unit. San Quentin staff has done this on its own. With such significant success there is still much to achieve. Equally important have been our attempts to engage local communities in these efforts. By building a continuum between the institution and the community to which a parolee returns, we strengthen a parolee's ability to succeed and ensure a positive impact on public safety.

Q: What do you see new for Condemned Row in San Quentin?

A: The funding has been approved. The building plans have

been finalized. The plans have gone out to contractors for bids. The tentative groundbreaking is set for early spring 2009.

Q: Many of the prisoners fear a major overhaul coming to educational and self-help programs once you depart. What assurance can you provide them?

A: None. As of this date, Nov. 17, 2008, I have no idea (honestly!!!!) who the next warden will be. However, I would expect the new warden to be wise enough to study the terrain carefully before setting off in any direction.

Q: How did you manage to work with the federal receiver in light of a constant tug-of-war between the receiver and the state, especially with many healthcare construction projects at stake in San Quentin?

A: We had and have a common goal: improving healthcare delivery systems in a correctional environment. We haven't always succeeded in that regard but we have always been able to come back around to our starting point and get back on track.

Q: Is this a departure to another field, or trip to where the fish are biting, and what advice do you have for the next warden, and to the prisoners?

A: I suspect I will do something in or around corrections. I am only sure that it won't be as a warden! I will take my time and see where I can be most useful. Advice for the new warden? If it's a sound policy or procedure, follow it consistently. If it's a bad policy or procedure, change it. Don't ignore it. Advice for prisoners? Do your own time. It's that simple. We have far too many inmates who think it's their business to get into other people's business and judge them or tell them how to behave. A bit less of that would do well for everyone's sense of well-being.

Robert Ayers, Jr., may say that he doesn't have a legacy, it's just all "common sense." But Robert Ayers, Jr., will, among other things, be remembered as the man who brought the *San Quentin News* to life after two decades absence.

We Want To Hear From You!

The San Quentin News welcomes and encourages inmates, free staff, custody staff, volunteers and people and entities outside of the institution to submit articles for this publication.

Please use the following criteria when submitting:

- Please limit your submitted articles to no more than 350 words.
 - Articles will be edited for content and length.
 - The newspaper is not a medium to file grievances. Use the prison appeals process.
- However, we do encourage submitting stories and/or articles which are news-worthy and encompass issues that will have an impact on the prison populace.
- Please do not use offensive language in your submissions.
 - Art work is welcomed (i.e. poems, songs, cartoons, drawings).
 - Letters to the editor should be short and to the point.

Send Submissions to:
Education Dept. / SQ News
San Quentin, CA 94964

(No Street address required)



Harry Hagy, CDCR No. A-53751, the oldest man in San Quentin, returned to his maker, Wednesday, December 3, 2008, 51 days short of his 86th birthday. Harry, died at Doctors Hospital of San Pablo, at 3:00 p.m. He was not able to regain consciousness or breath on his own. For those who knew Harry of 1-N-22, there will be a religious service at the Catholic Chapel on Dec. 11, at 2 p.m.

San Quentin News

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Chaplain Howard 1924 - 2008

Chaplain Harry W. Howard, born Sept. 22, 1924, passed

away on Sept. 18, 2008.

Harry's loving wife, Kay, preceded him to Heaven in 1999. Harry is survived by two sons: Howie and Steve. Harry was devoted to his ministry of spreading the Lord's word. He worked for over 30 years in the California state prison system, and was a father-like figure to many prisoners. After retiring as a chaplain, Harry continued to volunteer at San Quentin State Prison as well as doing other prison ministry work. We have been privileged to know him. Well done, Harry.

san Quentin Print Shop

This publication is printed by the students in the San Quentin Vocational Printing Program.